

THE ANNOTATED SHAKESPEARE

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

*Romeo and Juliet*



FULLY ANNOTATED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION, BY BURTON RAFFEL

WITH AN ESSAY BY HAROLD BLOOM

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Burton Raffel, General Editor

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For my own Juliet: Elizabeth



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## ABOUT THIS BOOK



Written four centuries ago, in a fairly early form of Modern English, *Romeo and Juliet* is a gorgeously passionate, witty, and complex text. Many of the play's social and historical underpinnings necessarily need, for the modern reader, the kinds of explanation offered in the Introduction. But what needs even more, and far more detailed, explanation are the play's very words. Toward the end of act 1, scene 1, Romeo and his loyal friend, Benvolio (the name means, in Italian, "well loved," just as Romeo's name, in Italian, means "pilgrim"), spar wittily about the nature of love:

*Benvolio* Alas that love, so gentle in his view,  
Should be so tyrannous and rough in proof.

*Romeo* Alas that love, whose view is muffled still,  
Should without eyes see pathways to his will.  
(lines 78–81)

For comprehension of these lines—completely typical of the play's language—the modern reader needs help. In Benvolio's two lines,



gentle = courteous, noble

in his view = in his [Cupid's] appearance ("his" frequently means "its")

rough = disagreeable, harsh

in proof = how it turns out/is experienced.

And in Romeo's two lines,

view is muffled still = whose sight is forever/always blinded  
without eyes: Cupid is blind

his will = his pleasure, desire.

The modern reader or listener of course will better understand this brief exchange in context, as the drama unfolds. But without full explanation of words that have over the years shifted in meaning, neither the modern reader nor the modern listener is likely to be equipped for full comprehension.

I believe annotations of this sort create the necessary bridges, from Shakespeare's four-centuries-old English across to ours. The only "difficult" words I have not explained in this brief passage are "tyrannous" and "pathways"; the omissions are deliberate. Many readers new to matters Elizabethan will already understand these still current, and largely unchanged, words. Some readers, to be sure, will be able to comprehend unusual, historically different meanings without glosses. But when it comes to words like "tyrannous" and "pathways," those who are not familiar with the modern meaning will easily find clear, simple definitions in any modern dictionary. And they may be obliged to make fairly frequent use of such a dictionary: there are a good many less familiar words, in *Romeo and Juliet*, to be found in modern dictionaries

and not glossed here. Yet most readers are not likely to understand Shakespeare's intended meaning, absent such glosses as I here offer. I have followed the same principles in *The Annotated Milton*, published in 1999, and in my annotated edition of *Hamlet*, published (as the initial volume in this series) in 2003. Classroom experience has validated these editions. Classes of mixed upper-level undergraduates and graduate students have more quickly and thoroughly transcended language barriers than ever before. This allows the teacher, or a general reader without a teacher, to move more promptly and confidently to the non-linguistic matters that have made Shakespeare and Milton great and important poets.

It is the inevitable forces of linguistic change, operant in all living tongues, which have inevitably created such wide degrees of obstacles to ready comprehension—not only sharply different meanings, but subtle, partial shifts in meaning that allow us to think we understand when, alas, we do not. Speakers of related languages like Dutch and German also experience this shifting of the linguistic ground. Like early Modern English (ca. 1600) and the Modern English now current, those languages are too close for those who know only one language, and not the other, to be readily able always to recognize what they correctly understand and what they do not. When, for example, a speaker of Dutch says, “Men kofer is kapot,” a speaker of German will know that something belonging to the Dutchman is broken (“kapot” = “kaputt” in German, and “men” = “mein”). But without more linguistic awareness than the average person is apt to have, the German speaker will not identify “kofer” (“trunk” in Dutch) with “Körper”—a modern German word meaning “physique, build, body.” The closest word to “kofer” in modern German,

indeed, is “Scrankkoffer,” which is too large a leap for ready comprehension. Speakers of different Romance languages (such as French, Spanish, or Italian), and all other related but not identical tongues, all experience these difficulties, as well as the difficulty of understanding a text written in their own language five, or six, or seven hundred years earlier. Shakespeare’s English is not yet so old that it requires, like many historical texts in French and German, or like Old English texts—for example, *Beowulf*—a modern translation. Much poetry evaporates in translation: language is immensely particular. The sheer sound of Dante in thirteenth-century Italian is profoundly worth preserving. So too is the sound of Shakespeare.

I have annotated prosody (metrics) only when it seemed truly necessary or particularly helpful. Readers should have no problem with the silent “e”: whenever an “e” is not silent, it is marked “è”. The notation used for prosody, which is also used in the explanation of Elizabethan pronunciation, follows the extremely simple form of my *From Stress to Stress: An Autobiography of English Prosody* (see “Further Reading,” near the end of this book). Syllables with metrical stress are capitalized; all other syllables are in lowercase letters. I have managed to employ normal Elizabethan spellings, in most indications of pronunciation, but I have sometimes been obliged to deviate, in the higher interest of being understood.

I have annotated, as well, a limited number of such other matters, sometimes of interpretation, sometimes of general or historical relevance, as have seemed to me seriously worthy of inclusion. These annotations have been most carefully restricted: this is not intended to be a book of literary commentary. It is for that reason that the glossing of metaphors has been severely restricted.

There is almost literally no end to discussion and/or analysis of metaphor, especially in Shakespeare. To yield to temptation might well be to double or triple the size of this book—and would also change it from a historically oriented language guide to a work of an unsteadily mixed nature. In the process, I believe, neither language nor literature would be well or clearly served.

Where it seemed useful, and not obstructive of important textual matters, I have modernized spelling, including capitalization. I have frequently repunctuated. Since the original printed texts of *Romeo and Juliet* (there not being, as there never are for Shakespeare, surviving manuscripts) are frequently careless as well as self-contradictory, I have been relatively free with the wording of stage directions – and in some cases have added small directions, to indicate who is speaking to whom. I have made no emendations; I have necessarily been obliged to make choices. Textual decisions have been annotated when the differences between or among the original printed texts seem either marked or of unusual interest.

In the interests of compactness and brevity, I have employed in my annotations (as consistently as I am able) a number of stylistic and typographical devices:

- The annotation of a single word does not repeat that word
- The annotation of more than one word repeats the words being annotated, which are followed by an equals sign and then by the annotation; the footnote number in the text is placed after the last of the words being annotated
- In annotations of a single word, alternate meanings are usually separated by commas; if there are distinctly different ranges of meaning, the annotations are separated by arabic numerals

inside parentheses—(1), (2), and so on; in more complexly worded annotations, alternative meanings expressed by a single word are linked by a forward slash, or solidus: /

- Explanations of textual meaning are not in parentheses; comments about textual meaning are
- Except for proper nouns, the word at the beginning of all annotations is in lower case
- Uncertainties are followed by a question mark, set in parentheses: (?)
- When particularly relevant, “translations” into twenty-first-century English have been added, in parentheses
- Annotations of repeated words are not repeated. Explanations of the first instance of such common words are followed by the sign★. Readers may easily track down the first annotation, using the brief Finding List at the back of the book. Words with entirely separate meanings are annotated only for meanings no longer current in Modern English.

The most important typographical device here employed is the sign ★ placed after the first (and only) annotation of words and phrases occurring more than once. There is an alphabetically arranged listing of such words and phrases in the Finding List at the back of the book. The Finding List contains no annotations but simply gives the words or phrases themselves and the numbers of the relevant act, the scene within that act, and the footnote number within that scene for the word’s first occurrence.

## INTRODUCTION



A far more complex drama than it is sometimes thought, *Romeo and Juliet* (1595?) takes its basic story line from Arthur Brooke's long narrative poem, *The Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet* (1562). Shakespeare could not have taken much else: Brooke's poem is written in one of the dullest verse forms in English literary history, Poulter's Measure, being rhymed couplets of alternating hexameter and septameter length. The *Tragical History* makes soporific reading. Yet the source of a plot is no more than a beginning; Shakespeare almost invariably worked from borrowed plots. He could have taken this story line from a good many other sources, for many were readily available; there is convincing evidence, however, that he worked from Brooke alone. Again, what matters most, and what I will discuss here, is what Shakespeare did with his ready-made narrative.

*Romeo and Juliet* is, first of all, one of the central texts in the long history of Western love stories. How and why one person falls in love with another is obviously, and properly, of primary human concern. Nobel Prize-winner Isaac Bashevis Singer often said that all stories are love stories. "The universal novel of creation," he wrote in *Gifts*, at age eighty-one, "is finally a love story."

And “Romeo” has long since come to mean, in our language, a lover, as well as someone persistently preoccupied with loving.

It is a mistake to believe either that Shakespeare’s Romeo is excessively passionate or that he and Juliet are in some way recklessly immature and unthinking. Renaissance (and to a large extent later medieval) approaches to love were founded on two bodily organs, neither of them the brain. The eyes were thought to begin the process. Sight was indeed indispensable, and sight, like the wind and the rain, happens to be a physically based occurrence over which humans have no control. But the eyes alone could not create love. The eyes transmitted the image they saw, automatically and without any notion of preconception or planning, straight into the organs of emotion. Stirred by such a physical impact, the recipient’s heart and soul were inevitably and irreversibly bound by that wry, sly, and even malevolent god Love, who was identified with the bow-wielding blind imp, Cupid.

In more physiological terms than the Renaissance usually employed: it was image-carrying light beams that, like Cupid’s arrows, were shot into receiving—and to be sure receptive—eyes. These light beams traveled directly and without interruption down into the inner, affective seats of being. (One must fudge a bit, here, since it had not yet been fully settled that the heart was uniquely the center of such matters; the liver and sometimes also the kidneys were still considered relevant.) The many light-oriented metaphors used, first and last, to depict the heroine of Romeo and Juliet fairly leap out at us; their ideational underpinning is a good deal less obvious. It is still less obvious that Juliet, too, sometimes uses light-related metaphors in speaking of Romeo and of their love. Their love, she says, is “Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be / Ere one can say ‘It lightens’”

(2.2.119–120). When the Nurse is late returning from her message-bearing visit to Romeo, Juliet declares, “Love’s heralds should be thoughts, / Which ten times faster glide than the sun’s beams” (2.5.4–5). It is entirely fitting, to be sure, that her love is not depicted in precisely the same terms as his. She can be his sun, moon, and stars, but an Elizabethan woman views her beloved as her “lord.” Juliet is crisp and direct, for a Renaissance woman (though no more straightforward than many of Shakespeare’s female characters—think of Desdemona, Portia, Cordelia, and the often misunderstood Ophelia). She apologizes to Romeo for her forwardness. Romeo is reverential, gentle, respectful. But he does not apologize for his sweeping passion.

If, as often happens, the lover did not have the same powerful effect on his or her beloved, love was unilateral and largely unsatisfiable. What factors made for receptivity were left vague and largely undiscussed. Love happened, or it did not. The party or parties involved knew with great clarity what they knew, once they had been stricken; nothing else counted. Like so many developments in human existence, life’s directions were subject to unknowable forces—destiny, fate, or astrological configurations. Rebellion against such outwardly determined directions was always possible. But not successful: fatalism was not simply another way of looking at life but a recognition of fundamental reality.

Far from being wantons, accordingly, Romeo and Juliet were fortunate to find one another, just as they were unfortunate in other ways. Rosaline—Romeo’s unseen, unheard, but often referred to—initial beloved, was to the Renaissance mind someone our hero plainly loved only conceptually, intellectually. That sort of “love” was not and could not be genuine, profound, and soul shaking. Nor was it generally reciprocated. It was a mere game.



People did not trifle or toy with Cupid's unstoppable arrows. They bled from them, which is a very different affair entirely. Love was not to be casually identified with mere happiness.

The comparative youth of Romeo and, especially, of Juliet is yet another non-issue. Count Paris appears to be younger than Romeo, and to my knowledge, no one has ever suggested that his unreciprocated but apparently genuine love for Juliet is in any way immature. The critical focus is of course largely on Juliet, who is not quite fourteen. But not only do human females mature biologically at a much more rapid pace than do human males, they also mature emotionally at roughly corresponding speed. Wives have always tended to be younger than husbands; legal limits on marriageable age (a relatively recent development) tend to recognize and enforce custom. In the southern states of the United States, not so long ago, males were permitted to marry at sixteen, females at fourteen. It is generally accepted that maturation accelerates in warmer climates—and Shakespeare's play is set in Italy. Indeed, Mary Queen of Scots had been married at fifteen. For a marriage to be permissible, in England at that time, the minimal age was "at least 14 for a boy and 12 for a girl."<sup>1</sup> Throughout Europe, indeed, "girls could be betrothed at the age of three, though marriage had to be delayed till twelve. In the fifteenth century a daughter unmarried at fifteen was a family disgrace."<sup>2</sup>

Yet Romeo and Juliet's misfortunes are not caused exclusively by dark, mysterious, and unfathomable powers. Lawrence Stone's analysis of these lovers' downfall does not fully explain the play, but it does highlight a social vector that we in our time often neglect: "To an Elizabethan audience the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet . . . lay not so much in their ill-starred romance as in the

way they brought destruction upon themselves by violating the norms of the society in which they lived, which . . . meant strict filial obedience and loyalty to the traditional friendships and enmities of the lineage. An Elizabethan courtier would be familiar enough with the bewitching passion of love to feel some sympathy with the young couple, but he would see clearly enough where duty lay.”<sup>3</sup> We may say with equal justice that the “norms” of the society in which these lovers lived, which tolerated (even if they did not encourage) deep and dangerous feuds, brought destruction and death to many more than Romeo and Juliet alone. In the course of the tragedy, Mercutio, Tybalt, and Paris die for exactly the same flawed cause.

Not only is it clear that the Capulets and the Montagues are at fault, but we are given satiric, barbed portraits of the leaders of both families. They are very old, but not remarkably wise, for all their great years. “What noise is this? Give me my long sword, ho!” croaks old Capulet in act 1, scene 1 (line 83). To which senile bravado his wife responds, “A crutch, a crutch! Why call you for a sword?” Capulet persists, seeing old Montague coming, and—to Capulet’s mind—“flourish[ing] his blade in spite of me.” Montague is no wiser or more mature. “Thou villain Capulet!” he cries, and then, when his wife too attempts to restrain him, he exclaims, “Hold me not, let me go.” Lady Montague, womanly more sensible, asserts, “Thou shalt not stir one foot to seek a foe.”

In the course of the play, we see more of old Capulet than we do of old Montague, and what we see usually fits the same intemperate, often befuddled initial portrait. Capulet is more mellow, at first, in act 1, scene 5, even urging calm and tolerance on Tybalt. But when Tybalt argues with him, Capulet sputters out an explosively irrational tirade, mixing his invective with staccato com-

ments on and to the dancing guests (lines 76–81, 82–88). Capulet’s denunciation of his daughter for refusing to honor her father’s plans for her marriage is neither tempered nor sagacious: “Out, you green sickness carrion! Out, you baggage! . . . An you be mine, I’ll give you to my friend— / An you be not, hang! Beg! Starve! Die in the streets!” (3.5.156, 192–193). And in act 4, scene 4, just before the discovery of Juliet’s “death,” Capulet plays the role of an excited, dithering old fellow, far too caught up to display even minimal dignity. “A jealous hood, a jealous hood!” he cackles at his wife, when she assures him that his errant nocturnal amours are over and done with (line 13).

A more trenchant argument based on the prevailing social norms as Shakespeare has chosen to present them would be, in fact, that the upper levels of Verona society are not only at fault but badly in need of reformation. “Capulet, Montague,” says the prince, plainly including himself and his reign in the castigation. “See what a scourge is laid upon your hate . . . / And I, for winking at your discords too, / Have lost a brace of kinsmen. All are punished” (5.3.291–294). Verona’s citizenry is literally up in arms against violent brawling in its streets. “Down with the Capulets! Down with the Montagues!” (1.1.83). “As much as the deaths of Juliet and her Romeo, so young and so alive,” emphasizes Rosalie L. Colie, “the waste of a man like Mercutio cries out for civil settlement of the old men’s vendetta.”<sup>4</sup>

But the citizenry was not against the wearing of swords by all males of the upper levels (“gentlemen”), nor against the chivalric codes by which fighting among those gentlemen was more or less regulated. Neither, at least in *Romeo and Juliet*, does Shakespeare appear so disposed. Tybalt, negatively portrayed, is trigger-happy, but Mercutio, not far behind in violence and aggression, is pre-

sented with magical warmth. So, too, is Romeo, who takes swift and successful revenge on Tybalt, for Mercutio's death, and who reluctantly but efficiently disposes of an angry and violence-hungry Paris. It must be remembered that one of Shakespeare's most important dramatist colleagues, Ben Jonson, wore and on occasion used a sword to settle a quarrel, once killing his antagonist. Jonson claimed gentlemanly status, though in all probability falsely. Another major English dramatist, Christopher Marlowe, was stabbed to death in a tavern brawl, the rights and wrongs of which have never been decisively determined: Marlowe's death may well have been a political assassination. But Marlowe was a university graduate, and thus of undoubted gentlemanly rank. John Day, a distinctly minor playwright but also a university graduate, killed the obscure playwright Henry Porter with his rapier. Shakespeare had no gentlemanly background, but he spent years trying, finally successfully, to obtain (for a price) a gentleman's coat of arms. He was also, on the record, very much occupied with attaining landowner status, yet another gentlemanly attribute.

In short, social hierarchies—which to this day play a large role in Britain—were in Shakespeare's time starkly powerful. "The key symbols of Tudor and Early Stuart society were the hat [which the lower classes had to doff to their betters] and the whip [which the upper classes were entitled to use on their inferiors]. . . . There was even Tudor class legislation about sport, archery being prescribed for the lower orders, and bowls and tennis restricted to gentlemen with an income of over 100 [pounds] a year."<sup>5</sup> The masters commanded; the servants obeyed. "Get me ink and paper / And hire post horses," Romeo orders. His servant, Balthasar, demurs. "I do beseech you, sir, have patience." A

wiser servant can thus make what seem to him or her useful suggestions. Romeo pays no heed: "Leave me and do the thing I bid thee do . . . Get thee gone" (5.1.25–27, 30, 32). And Balthasar goes, without another word.

One measure of the Nurse's partially ambivalent class status is precisely the impertinence displayed toward her by her servant, Peter. She does indeed have a servant, which is usually a lady's prerogative, but the Nurse's servant talks back, most casually. "I saw no man use you at his pleasure" (2.4.146). Paris neither expects nor receives such flippancies from his servant. "Give me thy torch, boy. Hence, and stand aloof" (5.3.1). Nor does Romeo indulge his manservant, especially when he is grimly serious. "If thou . . . do return to pry . . .," he warns Balthasar, "By heaven, I will tear thee joint by joint" (5.3.33–35). We may perhaps doubt, from our twenty-first-century perspective, that Romeo would so assault his servant. But Balthasar quite rightly has no such doubts, knowing that aroused masters could and did do exactly such mayhem. "I dare not," Balthasar tells Friar Laurence, who has requested his companionship in entering the tomb. "My master knows not but I am gone hence, / and fearfully did menace me with death / If I did stay" (5.3.131–134). Not even priestly protection and shielding can persuade him to the contrary. Indeed, one sure sign of the buffoon stature of Petruchio, in *The Taming of the Shrew*, is precisely that, talked back to by a servant, he does not use his sword or his dagger but first argues with the servant, at some length, then performs the commanded act himself, and at last "wrings [the wonderfully insouciant servant] by the ears." The servant cries out for help, as no ordinary servant would even think of doing, and even less typically announces that "My master is mad"—that is, insane (1.2.5–17). It was not then considered a mad act for

masters to behave with great violence to their servants. Patricia Fumerton points out that “much evidence points to unsettling relations between servants . . . and their masters. . . . [A]s court records testify, mistreatment and violence . . . were common.”<sup>6</sup> Sir William Blackstone’s *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, written almost two centuries after *Romeo and Juliet*, contains a discussion of “assaults committed by masters and mistresses on apprentice and servants . . . , so as to endanger life, or permanently injure health.” Parents in Renaissance times had absolute rights over their children, and “there were similarities between the position of servants in the household and that of children in the family. . . . Both owed obedience and service to the head of the household.” It is generally speaking true that the sixteenth century saw “the ultimately successful assertion of a royal monopoly of violence both public and private.” But it is also true that “In the sixteenth and seventeenth century tempers were short and weapons to hand. . . . [A] gentleman carried a weapon at all times, and did not hesitate to use it. It was none other than Philip Sidney who warned his father’s secretary that if he read his letters to his father again “I will thrust my dagger into you. And trust to it, for I speak it in earnest.”<sup>8</sup>

Lord Herbert of Cherbury, himself a good poet and the older brother of a great one, George Herbert, writes unashamedly in his autobiography that, in January 1609, a ship on which he was returning from France began to break apart. A boat, a “shalop,” set off from Dover: “I got into it first with my sword in my hand, and called for Sir Thomas Lucy [the only other man of rank on board], saying that if any man offer’d to get in before him, I should resist him with my sword . . . [A]fter I had receiv’d [Lucy], [I] bid the Shalop make away to shoar.”<sup>9</sup>

Rapiers, dueling, sword masters, and sword-fighting treatises were usually Italian imports, as Shakespeare of course well knew. It was all something of an Elizabethan craze. And as A. L. Rowse notes, it is socially significant “that the duel now vindicated, not loyalty or the law, but ‘personal honour, pride, or vanity.’”<sup>10</sup> Even the dinner table could be a source of serious violence, for it was a sobering fact needing to be reckoned with that literally everyone ate by impaling food on knives, usually sharp ones that diners brought to the table themselves. Forks, which were the replacement for knives, were an Italian invention that did not come into use, in England, until 1611.<sup>11</sup>

Violence-loving aristocrats, from the sober and imperious Duke to the dancers at Capulet’s festive ball, are plainly at the center of *Romeo and Juliet*. But as he so often does, Shakespeare brings onto his stage a good many representatives of Renaissance England’s lower classes, and not simply as traditionally “low,” or comic, characters. Even Sampson and Gregory, two of the “heartless hinds” at whom Tybalt sneers (1.1.75), are a good deal more than mere buffoons. All Elizabethans relished quick wits and nimble tongues; these two members of the serving classes demonstrate both—and their punning jests quickly turn, as male prattle has always done, to matters bawdy. “I will take the wall of any man or maid of Montague’s,” says Sampson, adding that “women, being the weaker vessels, are ever thrust to the wall” (1.1.24–25, 28–29). And in the broader senses of the phrase, these two keep their wits about them: “Fear me not,” says Sampson, assuring Gregory of his support. And Gregory, knowing his companion only too well, at once replies, “No, marry,” as far as your support goes, “I fear thee!” (lines 47–48). The nameless and illiterate servant sent as a messenger, bearing invitations to a written list of

persons, shows more good sense than Capulet, who dispatches him (and to whose order any lowbred protest would plainly be risky): “Find them out whose names are written here? It is written that the shoemaker should meddle with his yard and the tailor with his last, the fisher with his pencil and the painter with his nets, but I am sent to find those persons whose names are here writ, and can never find what names the writing person hath here writ” (1.2.38–42).

Still, it is only Juliet’s Nurse, among the play’s servants, whose role assumes major proportions. Having spent all fourteen of Juliet’s years in relatively intimate association with the Capulet family, she has taken on a status poised somewhere between aristocratic and plebian. It is the Nurse to whom Lady Capulet hands the keys to locked store rooms—keys necessarily denied to mere servants, since locking such doors is expressly intended, and perfectly understood by everyone, to keep servants from stealing (4.4.1). It is the Nurse who is admitted to Lady Capulet’s “counsel” with her daughter (1.3.9); the Nurse who, told by Lady Capulet to “hold thy peace,” continues to ramble on (line 49); the Nurse who has the temerity, not only to scold her master for his usage of Juliet, but to protest his demeaning reply: “I speak no treason. . . . May one not speak?” (3.5.172, 173). And perhaps most impressively, it is the Nurse who participates essentially as an equal in the quasi-choral dirge spoken for Juliet by Capulet, Lady Capulet, and Paris (4.5.22–64).

*Romeo and Juliet* was, in the words of our time, a smash hit. “All the young men quoted it,” observes Muriel Bradbrook.<sup>12</sup> It has remained a smash hit: no one, I think, has explained that fact so well as Mark Van Doren: “Few other plays, even by Shakespeare, engage the audience so intimately. . . . The tension of the entire



play, while we await the kiss of fire and powder which will consume its most precious persons, is maintained at an endurable point by the simplicity with which sorrow is made lyric. Even the conceits [‘metaphors’] of Romeo and Juliet sound like things that they and they alone would say. . . . [W]ith a correct and powerful understanding of the surrendered heart, the listening mind . . . [Shakespeare] spares nothing yet handles gently.”<sup>13</sup>

The purpose of this book is to make *Romeo and Juliet’s* glowing words as readily accessible as if they had just been written.

#### Notes

1. David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 311.
2. Will Durant, *The Renaissance* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1953), 578.
3. Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500–1800* (New York: Harper, 1977), 87.
4. Rosalie L. Colie, *Shakespeare’s Living Art* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974), 23.
5. Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558–1641*, abridged ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 20, 18.
6. “London’s Vagrant Economy,” in *Material London, ca. 1600*, ed. Lena Cowan Orlin (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 211.
7. Alexander Cowan, *Urban Europe, 1500–1700* (London: Hodder, 1998), 71–72.
8. Stone, *Crisis of the Aristocracy*, 20, 18, 97, 108.
9. *The Life of Edward, First Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Written by Himself*, ed. J. M. Shuttleworth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 51.
10. A. L. Rowse, *The Elizabethan Renaissance: The Life of the Society* (London: Macmillan, 1971), 197.

## INTRODUCTION

11. Margaret Visser, *The Rituals of Dinner* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1991), 186, 190.
12. Muriel Bradbrook, *Shakespeare: The Poet in His World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 99.
13. Mark Van Doren, *Shakespeare* (New York: Holt, 1939), 59–60.



# Romeo and Juliet



## CHARACTERS (DRAMATIS PERSONAE)

*Chorus*

*Escalus* (Prince of Verona)

*Paris* (a young Count, the Prince's kinsman)

*Montague* and *Capulet* (heads of two feuding families)

*An older, unnamed Capulet*

*Romeo* (Montague's son)

*Tybalt* (Lady Capulet's nephew)

*Mercutio* (the Prince's kinsman and Romeo's friend)

*Benvolio* (Montague's nephew and Romeo's friend)

*Friar Laurence* (a Franciscan monk)

*Friar John* (a Franciscan monk)

*Balthasar* (Romeo's servant)

*Abram* (Montague's servant)

*Sampson* (Capulet's servant)

*Gregory* (Capulet's servant)

*Peter* (servant of Juliet's Nurse)

*An Apothecary*

*Three Musicians*

*Three Watchmen*

*An Officer*

*Lady Montague* (Montague's wife)

*Lady Capulet* (Capulet's wife)

*Juliet* (Capulet's daughter)

*Juliet's Nurse*

*Citizens of Verona, Gentlemen and Gentlewomen of both houses,*

*Maskers,<sup>1</sup> Torchbearers, Pages, Guards, Servants, and Attendants*

<sup>1</sup> persons disguised by a mask

# Act I



## PROLOGUE

ENTER CHORUS<sup>1</sup>

*Chorus* Two households, both alike in dignity,<sup>2</sup>  
In fair<sup>3</sup> Verona, where we lay our scene,<sup>4</sup>  
From ancient grudge<sup>5</sup> break to new mutiny,<sup>6</sup>  
Where civil<sup>7</sup> blood makes civil<sup>8</sup> hands unclean.<sup>9</sup>  
From forth<sup>10</sup> the fatal<sup>11</sup> loins of these two foes<sup>12</sup> 5  
A pair of star-crossed<sup>13</sup> lovers take<sup>14</sup> their life,

1 a single actor, representing/speaking for the entire troupe of actors

2 rank, nobleness, merit

3 beautiful, pleasing, delightful\*

4 lay our scene = place/set our play

5 ill will

6 break to new mutiny = burst into new discord/quarrel

7 communal

8 (1) communal, (2) becoming, proper, decent

9 impure, foul

10 from forth = out of

11 fated, doomed

12 the Capulets and the Montagues

13 star-crossed = subject to malignant astrological influence

14 receive, obtain

Whose misadventured<sup>15</sup> piteous overthrows<sup>16</sup>  
 Doth with their death bury<sup>17</sup> their parents' strife.  
 The fearful<sup>18</sup> passage<sup>19</sup> of their death-marked love,  
 10 And the continuance of their parents' rage,  
 Which, but<sup>20</sup> their children's end, naught<sup>21</sup> could remove,  
 Is now the two hours' traffic<sup>22</sup> of our stage,  
 The which if you with patient ears attend,<sup>23</sup>  
 What here shall miss,<sup>24</sup> our toil shall strive to mend.

EXIT

## SCENE I

*Verona. A public place*

ENTER SAMPSON AND GREGORY, BOTH CAPULETS

15 *Sampson* Gregory, on my word, we'll not carry<sup>25</sup> coals.<sup>26</sup>  
*Gregory* No, for then we should be colliers.<sup>27</sup>  
*Sampson* I mean, an<sup>28</sup> we be in choler, we'll draw.<sup>29</sup>

15 unfortunate

16 ruin, destruction (noun)

17 (1) inter, (2) abandon

18 dreadful, terrible, awful\*

19 movement, course, progression, path

20 except for

21 nothing\*

22 business

23 listen, consider, follow closely\*

24 be lacking

25 submit to

26 insults (thrown like lumps of coals)

27 (1) dealers in/transporters of coal, (2) angry, wrathful ("choler"), (3) wearing dog- or prison-collars, and (4) the hangman's noose (neck collar)

28 if\*

29 pull a sword from its sheath\*

- Gregory* Ay, while you live, draw your neck out of collar.
- Sampson* I strike quickly, being moved.<sup>30</sup>
- Gregory* But thou art not quickly moved to strike. 20
- Sampson* A dog<sup>31</sup> of the house<sup>32</sup> of Montague moves me.
- Gregory* To move is to stir, and to be valiant is to stand.<sup>33</sup>  
Therefore, if thou art moved, thou runn'st away.
- Sampson* A dog of that house shall move me to stand. I will take  
the wall<sup>34</sup> of any man or maid of Montague's. 25
- Gregory* That shows thee a weak slave,<sup>35</sup> for the weakest goes  
to the wall.<sup>36</sup>
- Sampson* 'Tis true, and therefore women, being the weaker  
vessels,<sup>37</sup> are ever<sup>38</sup> thrust to the wall.<sup>39</sup> Therefore I will push  
Montague's men from the wall and thrust his maids<sup>40</sup> to the 30  
wall.
- Gregory* The quarrel is between our masters and us their men.
- Sampson* 'Tis all one. I will show myself a tyrant. When I have  
fought with the men, I will be civil<sup>41</sup> with the maids: I will  
cut off their heads. 35
- Gregory* The heads of the maids?
- Sampson* Ay, the heads of the maids, or their maidenheads.<sup>42</sup>

30 provoked, stirred up, angered\*

31 a dog = a worthless/despicable person, coward

32 household

33 (1) remain firm/steadfast, (2) have an erection

34 take the wall = keep one's place on the inner side of a walkway/pavement

35 rascal, fellow\* (always negative)

36 succumbs, is defeated

37 weaker vessels = having less strength/capacity than men

38 always\*

39 thrust to the wall = (1) defeated, (2) copulated with, against a wall

40 (1) women servants, (2) virgins

41 kind, courteous

42 virginity (the hymen/virginal membrane)



Take it in what sense<sup>43</sup> thou wilt.

*Gregory* They must take it in sense that feel it.

40 *Sampson* Me they shall feel, while I am able to stand<sup>44</sup> – and 'tis  
known I am a pretty piece of flesh.<sup>45</sup>

*Gregory* 'Tis well thou art not fish. If thou hadst,<sup>46</sup> thou hadst  
been poor John.<sup>47</sup> Draw thy tool!<sup>48</sup> Here comes two of the  
house of Montagues.<sup>49</sup>

ENTER TWO OTHER SERVINGMEN, ABRAM AND BALTHASAR

45 *Sampson* My naked weapon is out.<sup>50</sup> Quarrel! I will back thee.

*Gregory* How? Turn thy back<sup>51</sup> and run?

*Sampson* Fear me not.<sup>52</sup>

*Gregory* No, marry.<sup>53</sup> I fear thee!<sup>54</sup>

*Sampson* Let us take<sup>55</sup> the law of our sides.<sup>56</sup> Let them begin.

50 *Gregory* I will frown as I pass by, and let them take it as they  
list.<sup>57</sup>

43 in what sense = what (1) meaning, (2) physical feeling (of the five senses)

44 remain (1) on my feet, (2) with penis erect

45 pretty piece of flesh = (1) handsome, well-made man, (2) sexually well  
endowed/of considerable genital size

46 were

47 poor John = dried salt cod, a poor man's food

48 (1) weapon of war, (2) penis

49 (singular and plural, in Elizabethan English, are often used differently from  
modern usage)

50 (more sexual punning)

51 turn thy back: deliberately provoking misunderstanding of "back you"

52 fear me not = don't worry about me

53 exclamatory: oh yes!\*

54 I fear thee = I'm afraid of you (being behind me? being disloyal?)

55 (1) follow, affirm, be careful to keep, make use of (2) act as if

56 of our sides = on our side

57 please (verb)

*Sampson* Nay, as they dare.<sup>58</sup> I will bite my thumb<sup>59</sup> at them,  
which is disgrace to them, if they bear it.

*Abram* Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

*Sampson* I do bite my thumb, sir.

55

*Abram* Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?

*Sampson* (*aside to Gregory*) Is the law of<sup>60</sup> our side if I say ay?

*Gregory* (*aside to Sampson*) No.

*Sampson* No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir. But I bite  
my thumb, sir.

60

*Gregory* Do you quarrel, sir?

*Abram* Quarrel, sir? No, sir.

*Sampson* But if you do, sir, I am for you.<sup>61</sup> I serve as good a man  
as you.

*Abram* No better.

65

*Sampson* Well, sir.<sup>62</sup>

ENTER BENVOLIO<sup>63</sup>

*Gregory* (*aside to Sampson*) Say “better.” Here comes one of my  
master’s kinsmen.

*Sampson* Yes, better, sir.

*Abram* You lie.

70

*Sampson* Draw, if you be<sup>64</sup> men. Gregory, remember thy

58 have the courage/boldness

59 bite my thumb = snap my thumb nail with my upper teeth (derisive,  
condescending)

60 on

61 I am for you = I am ready/a match for you

62 (equivocal remark, indicating uncertainty, indecision)

63 (benVOLyo)

64 are (subjunctive)

swashing<sup>65</sup> blow.

THEY FIGHT

*Benvolio* (beating down their swords) Part fools!

Put up<sup>66</sup> your swords. You know not what you do.

ENTER TYBALT

75 *Tybalt* What, art thou drawn<sup>67</sup> among these heartless hinds?<sup>68</sup>

Turn thee, Benvolio! Look upon thy death.

*Benvolio* I do but<sup>69</sup> keep the peace. Put up thy sword,

Or manage<sup>70</sup> it to part<sup>71</sup> these men with<sup>72</sup> me.

*Tybalt* What, drawn, and talk of peace? I hate the word

80 As I hate hell, all Montagues, and thee.

Have at thee,<sup>73</sup> coward!

THEY FIGHT

ENTER AN OFFICER, AND THREE OR FOUR CITIZENS  
WITH CLUBS OR PARTISANS<sup>74</sup>

*Officer* Clubs, bills,<sup>75</sup> and partisans! Strike! Beat them down!

*Citizens* Down with the Capulets! Down with the Montagues!

65 slashing

66 away

67 with your sword out

68 drawn among these heartless hinds = wielding your sword among such spiritless/foolish domestic servants

69 but = only\*

70 wield, use

71 separate

72 along with

73 have at thee = (an imperative, announcing an attack)

74 long-handled spears with various lateral cutting projections

75 long-handled, sometimes concave axe-like weapons with spikes jutting in the other direction from their blades

ENTER CAPULET IN HIS GOWN,<sup>76</sup> AND LADY CAPULET

*Capulet*           What noise is this? Give me my long sword,<sup>77</sup>  
ho!

*Lady Capulet*    A crutch, a crutch! Why call you for a sword?           85

*Capulet*           My sword, I say! Old Montague is come.  
And flourishes<sup>78</sup> his blade in spite of<sup>79</sup> me.

ENTER MONTAGUE AND LADY MONTAGUE

*Montague*        Thou villain<sup>80</sup> Capulet! – (*to Lady Montague*)  
Hold me not, let me go.

*Lady Montague*  Thou shalt not stir one foot to seek a foe.

ENTER PRINCE, WITH HIS ATTENDANTS

*Prince*           Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace,                   90

Profaners<sup>81</sup> of this neighbor-stained steel:<sup>82</sup>

Will they not hear? What, ho! You men, you beasts,<sup>83</sup>

That quench the fire of your pernicious<sup>84</sup> rage

With purple fountains issuing from your veins:

On pain of torture, from those bloody hands               95

Throw your mistempered<sup>85</sup> weapons to the ground

76 nightgown, dressing gown, bathrobe

77 long sword = sword with long cutting blade

78 brandishes, waves about

79 in spite of = as an insult to/in hatred/contempt for

80 (1) lowborn peasant, (2) rascal, scoundrel\*

81 defilers, violators

82 neighbor-stained steel = weapons stained with the blood of your neighbors

83 men of animal nature

84 destructive, ruinous, fatal

85 (1) tempered for evil purpose, (2) disorderly (steel is “tempered” in its manufacture)

And hear the sentence<sup>86</sup> of your movèd<sup>87</sup> prince.  
 Three civil<sup>88</sup> brawls, bred of<sup>89</sup> an airy<sup>90</sup> word  
 By thee, old Capulet, and Montague,  
 100 Have thrice disturbed the quiet of our streets  
 And made Verona's ancient<sup>91</sup> citizens  
 Cast by<sup>92</sup> their grave,<sup>93</sup> beseeming ornaments<sup>94</sup>  
 To wield old partisans, in hands as<sup>95</sup> old,  
 Cankered<sup>96</sup> with peace, to part<sup>97</sup> your cankered<sup>98</sup> hate.  
 105 If ever you disturb our streets again  
 Your lives shall pay<sup>99</sup> the forfeit<sup>100</sup> of the peace.  
 For this time<sup>101</sup> all the rest depart away.  
 You, Capulet, shall<sup>102</sup> go along with me,  
 And, Montague, come you this afternoon,  
 110 To know our<sup>103</sup> farther pleasure<sup>104</sup> in this case,<sup>105</sup>

86 authoritative decision/judgment

87 indignant, angered

88 civil = community wide/among citizens

89 bred of = generated by/born of

90 (1) lightly spoken, flippant (2) empty, imaginary

91 aged, old, venerable

92 cast by = throw away/aside, shed, drop

93 respected, revered

94 beseeming ornaments = appropriate/befitting\* equipment/accessories

95 just as, equally

96 rusted, corroded

97 break up

98 infected, gangrened, depraved

99 pay for

100 breach, violation

101 this time = now

102 must

103 the royal "we," meaning "I"

104 farther pleasure = additional wishes

105 set of circumstances

To old Freetown, our common judgment place.<sup>106</sup>  
 Once more, on pain<sup>107</sup> of death, all men depart.<sup>108</sup>

EXEUNT ALL BUT<sup>109</sup> MONTAGUE, LADY MONTAGUE,  
 AND BENVOLIO

*Montague* Who set this ancient quarrel new abroad<sup>110</sup>?

Speak, nephew. Were you by<sup>111</sup> when it began?

*Benvolio* Here were the servants of your adversary 115

And yours, close fighting<sup>112</sup> ere<sup>113</sup> I did approach.

I drew to part them. In the instant<sup>114</sup> came

The fiery Tybalt, with his sword prepared,<sup>115</sup>

Which as<sup>116</sup> he breathed defiance<sup>117</sup> to my ears,

He swung about<sup>118</sup> his head and cut the winds, 120

Who, nothing hurt withal,<sup>119</sup> hissed him in scorn.

While we were interchanging thrusts and blows,

Came more and more, and fought on part and part,<sup>120</sup>

Till the Prince came, who parted either part.<sup>121</sup>

106 common judgment place = general/usual decision-making place

107 penalty, punishment

108 go away (a command)

109 except

110 set . . . abroad = set astir, afoot (set abroad a cask/barrel of liquor = to open)

111 in the vicinity, close by

112 close fighting = fighting hard/at close quarters

113 before\*

114 in the instant = at that moment

115 at the ready, drawn from its sheath

116 even as

117 breathed defiance = exhaled/spoke hostility/challenge

118 around\*

119 therewith

120 on part and part = some on one side and some on the other

121 parted either part = separated each side/both sides

- 125 *Lady Montague* O, where is Romeo? Saw you him to-day?  
 Right glad I am he was not at this fray.
- Benvolio* Madam, an hour before the worshipped<sup>122</sup> sun  
 Peered forth<sup>123</sup> the golden window of the East,  
 A troubled mind drove me to walk abroad,<sup>124</sup>  
 130 Where underneath the grove of sycamore  
 That westward rooteth<sup>125</sup> from the city's side<sup>126</sup>  
 So early walking did I see your son.  
 Towards him I made,<sup>127</sup> but he was ware<sup>128</sup> of me  
 And stole<sup>129</sup> into the covert<sup>130</sup> of the wood.
- 135 I – measuring<sup>131</sup> his affections<sup>132</sup> by my own,  
 Which then most sought where most<sup>133</sup> might not be found,  
 Being one too many by<sup>134</sup> my weary<sup>135</sup> self –  
 Pursued<sup>136</sup> my humor,<sup>137</sup> not pursuing his,  
 And gladly shunned who<sup>138</sup> gladly fled from me.
- 140 *Montague* Many a morning hath he there been seen,  
 With tears augmenting the fresh morning's dew,

122 adored, venerated

123 forth from

124 in the open air

125 grows

126 outskirts

127 went, headed

128 wary

129 quietly withdrew\*

130 shelter, dense / thickly grown part

131 judging, evaluating

132 feelings, emotions, state of mind\*

133 most sought where most = principally sought where most people

134 all by

135 (1) discontented, dispirited, depressed, (2) tiresome

136 followed

137 mood\*

138 he who

Adding to clouds more clouds with his deep sighs,  
 But all so soon as the all-cheering sun  
 Should in the farthest East begin to draw  
 The shady curtains<sup>139</sup> from Aurora's<sup>140</sup> bed, 145  
 Away from light steals home my heavy<sup>141</sup> son  
 And private in his chamber pens himself,  
 Shuts up his windows, locks fair<sup>142</sup> daylight out  
 And makes himself an artificial night.  
 Black<sup>143</sup> and portentous<sup>144</sup> must this humor prove,<sup>145</sup> 150  
 Unless good counsel<sup>146</sup> may the cause remove.  
*Benvolio* My noble uncle, do you know the cause?  
*Montague* I neither know it nor can learn of<sup>147</sup> him.  
*Benvolio* Have you importuned<sup>148</sup> him by any means?<sup>149</sup>  
*Montague* Both by myself and many other friends. 155  
 But he, his own affections' counselor,  
 Is to himself – I will not say how true –  
 But to himself so secret and so close,<sup>150</sup>  
 So far from sounding and discovery,<sup>151</sup>

139 (bed curtains were in common use)

140 the dawn

141 (1) grave, severe, somber, (2) troubled, sad, despondent

142 fine

143 melancholy, dismal

144 ominous, threatening

145 demonstrate/turn out to be

146 advice, guidance, judgment\*

147 from

148 urged, pressed

149 by any means = in any way\*

150 uncommunicative

151 sounding and discovery = investigation/determination and explanation/  
disclosure



160 As is the bud bit with<sup>152</sup> an envious<sup>153</sup> worm  
 Ere he can spread his sweet leaves to the air  
 Or dedicate<sup>154</sup> his beauty to the sun.  
 Could we but learn from whence his sorrows grow  
 We would as willingly give cure as<sup>155</sup> know.

ENTER ROMEO

165 *Benvolio* See, where he comes. So please you step aside,  
 I'll know his grievance,<sup>156</sup> or be much denied.<sup>157</sup>  
*Montague* I would thou wert<sup>158</sup> so happy by thy stay<sup>159</sup>  
 To hear<sup>160</sup> true shrift.<sup>161</sup> Come, madam, let's away.

EXEUNT MONTAGUE AND LADY MONTAGUE

*Benvolio* Good morrow,<sup>162</sup> cousin.<sup>163</sup>

*Romeo* Is the day so young?

*Benvolio* But new<sup>164</sup> struck nine.

170 *Romeo* Ay me! sad hours seem long.

Was that my father that went hence so fast?

*Benvolio* It was. What sadness lengthens Romeo's hours?

152 by

153 malicious, spiteful\*

154 devote, open

155 as we would

156 the cause/nature of his grief

157 much denied = deeply/intensely refused/rejected

158 would thou wert = wish you might be

159 by thy stay = on account of your remaining here

160 to hear = that you will hear

161 true shrift = honest/sincere/reliable penance/repentance

162 morning, day\*

163 relative, any member of the larger family (often shortened to "coz")\*

164 newly, just

Romeo Not having that which having<sup>165</sup> makes them short.  
 Benvolio In love?  
 Romeo Out – 175  
 Benvolio Of love?  
 Romeo Out of her favor,<sup>166</sup> where I am in love.  
 Benvolio Alas that love, so gentle<sup>167</sup> in his view,<sup>168</sup>  
 Should be so tyrannous and rough<sup>169</sup> in proof.<sup>170</sup>  
 Romeo Alas that love, whose view is muffled still,<sup>171</sup> 180  
 Should without eyes<sup>172</sup> see pathways to his will.<sup>173</sup>  
 Where shall we dine? (*looks around*) O me! What fray was  
 here?  
 Yet tell me not, for I have heard it all.  
 Here's much to do with hate, but more with love.<sup>174</sup>  
 Why then, O brawling love, O loving hate,  
 O anything of<sup>175</sup> nothing first create!<sup>176</sup> 185  
 O heavy lightness, serious vanity!<sup>177</sup>  
 Misshapen chaos of well-seeming<sup>178</sup> forms!

165 if one has it

166 good graces

167 courteous, noble\*

168 in his view = in his ("its") appearance

169 disagreeable, harsh\*

170 in proof = how it turns out/is experienced

171 view is muffled still = whose sight is forever/always blinded

172 without eyes: Cupid is blind

173 pleasure, desire

174 (if "here" = the setting/location, because Rosaline, his current love, is a Capulet [and thus with "hate"]; if "here" = inside Romeo, because his heart is all awirl)

175 from, out of

176 created

177 futility, foolishness, idleness

178 appearing\* to be good

190 Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick health,  
 Still<sup>179</sup> waking sleep, that is not what it is!  
 This love feel I, that feel no love<sup>180</sup> in this.  
 Dost thou not laugh?

*Benvolio* No, coz, I rather weep.

*Romeo* Good heart,<sup>181</sup> at what?

*Benvolio* At thy good heart's  
 oppression.<sup>182</sup>

*Romeo* Why, such is love's transgression.<sup>183</sup>

195 Grievs of mine own lie heavy in my breast,  
 Which<sup>184</sup> thou wilt propagate,<sup>185</sup> to have it pressed<sup>186</sup>  
 With more of thine.<sup>187</sup> This love that thou hast shown  
 Doth add more grief to too much of mine own.<sup>188</sup>  
 Love is a smoke raised<sup>189</sup> with the fume<sup>190</sup> of sighs;  
 200 Being purged,<sup>191</sup> a fire sparkling in lovers' eyes;  
 Being vexed,<sup>192</sup> a sea nourished with lovers' tears.  
 What is it else?<sup>193</sup> A madness most discreet,<sup>194</sup>

179 (adverb)

180 feel no love = take no pleasure

181 (used like *mon ami*, in French)

182 burden, grief, trouble

183 sin

184 which griefs

185 multiply

186 have it pressed = squeeze my heart

187 your love for me

188 too much of mine own = my own grief, already too much

189 caused, roused, provoked

190 with the fume = by the exhalation/vapors

191 washed away, purified

192 irritated, annoyed, grieved

193 besides, in addition\*

194 (1) cautious, judicious, prudent, (2) courteous, polite

A choking gall,<sup>195</sup> and a preserving sweet.<sup>196</sup>

Farewell, my coz.

*Benvolio* Soft!<sup>197</sup> I will go along.<sup>198</sup>

An<sup>199</sup> if you leave me so, you do me wrong. 205

*Romeo* Tut! I have lost myself, I am not here.

This is not Romeo, he's some other where.

*Benvolio* Tell me in sadness,<sup>200</sup> who is that you love?

*Romeo* What, shall I groan and tell thee?

*Benvolio* Groan? Why, no.

But sadly tell me who. 210

*Romeo* Bid<sup>201</sup> a sick man in sadness make his will.

Ah, word ill<sup>202</sup> urged to one that is so ill.

In sadness, cousin, I do love a woman.

*Benvolio* I aimed so near<sup>203</sup> when I supposed you loved.

*Romeo* A right good markman,<sup>204</sup> and she's fair<sup>205</sup> I love. 215

*Benvolio* A right fair<sup>206</sup> mark,<sup>207</sup> fair<sup>208</sup> coz, is soonest hit.

*Romeo* Well, in that hit<sup>209</sup> you miss. She'll not be hit

195 choking gall = smothering bitterness

196 preserving sweet = preservative sweetness

197 wait a minute!

198 along with you

199 and

200 in sadness = in earnest

201 ask, entreat, beg

202 harshly, hurtfully, wrongfully, blamefully

203 closely

204 marksman

205 beautiful

206 right fair = proper/upright fine/pleasing

207 target

208 (term of respect/courtesy: Shakespeare uses "fair" three ways in the space of eight words)

209 stroke, guess

- With Cupid's arrow. She hath Dian's<sup>210</sup> wit,<sup>211</sup>  
 And, in strong proof of chastity well armed,<sup>212</sup>  
 220 From Love's<sup>213</sup> weak childish bow she lives unharmed.  
 She will not stay<sup>214</sup> the siege of loving terms,<sup>215</sup>  
 Nor bide<sup>216</sup> th' encounter<sup>217</sup> of assailing<sup>218</sup> eyes,  
 Nor ope<sup>219</sup> her lap<sup>220</sup> to saint-seducing gold.  
 O she's rich in beauty, only poor  
 225 That, when she dies, with beauty dies her store.<sup>221</sup>  
*Benvolio* Then she hath sworn that she will still live chaste?  
*Romeo* She hath, and in that sparing<sup>222</sup> makes huge waste,  
 For beauty, starved with her<sup>223</sup> severity,<sup>224</sup>  
 Cuts beauty off from all posterity.  
 230 She is too fair, too wise, wisely too fair,  
 To merit bliss<sup>225</sup> by making me despair.  
 She hath forsworn<sup>226</sup> to Love, and in that vow  
 Do I live dead that live to tell it now.

210 Diana = goddess of hunting and of chastity

211 mental capacity, intellectual power (also "wits")\*

212 equipped for battle

213 Cupid's

214 quietly endure ("sustain, abide by, depend on, support")

215 (1) conditions, (2) words

216 submit to, tolerate

217 face-to-face meeting, skirmish, duel

218 attacking, assaulting

219 open

220 (1) front of a skirt, (2) female genitalia

221 with beauty dies her store = what dies, along with her beauty, is her capacity for reproduction

222 saving, frugality, economy

223 Rosaline's

224 strictness, sternness, moral austerity

225 merit bliss = deserve / obtain her (Rosaline's) (1) happiness, (2) salvation

226 falsely sworn, perjured herself

*Benvolio* Be ruled<sup>227</sup> by me: forget to think of her.

*Romeo* O teach me how I should forget to think.

235

*Benvolio* By giving liberty unto thine eyes.

Examine other beauties.

*Romeo* 'Tis the way

To call hers – exquisite – in question<sup>228</sup> more.

These happy<sup>229</sup> masks that kiss fair ladies' brows,

Being black<sup>230</sup> puts us in mind they hide the fair.

240

He that is stricken blind cannot forget

The precious treasure of his eyesight lost.

Show me a mistress<sup>231</sup> that is passing<sup>232</sup> fair,

What doth her beauty serve but as a note<sup>233</sup>

Where I may read<sup>234</sup> who passed<sup>235</sup> that passing fair?

245

Farewell. Thou canst not teach me to forget.

*Benvolio* I'll pay<sup>236</sup> that doctrine,<sup>237</sup> or else die in debt.<sup>238</sup>

## EXEUNT

227 guided\*

228 call hers – exquisite – in question more = call/summon even more to mind her beauty, which is exquisite

229 lucky, fortunate

230 (1) black (color), (2) unattractive

231 woman commanding a man's heart, lady love

232 surpassing, transcendently\*

233 sign, token

234 see, find

235 surpassed

236 discharge the obligation of

237 lesson, knowledge

238 die in debt = die trying

## SCENE 2

*A street*

ENTER CAPULET, COUNT PARIS, AND HIS SERVANT

*Capulet* But Montague is bound<sup>1</sup> as well as I,  
 In penalty alike, and 'tis not hard, I think,  
 For men so old as we to keep the peace.

*Paris* Of honorable reckoning<sup>2</sup> are you both,  
 5 And pity 'tis you lived at odds so long.  
 But now, my lord, what say you to my suit?<sup>3</sup>

*Capulet* But saying o'er what I have said before.  
 My child is yet a stranger<sup>4</sup> in the world:  
 She hath not seen the change<sup>5</sup> of fourteen years.  
 10 Let two more summers wither<sup>6</sup> in their pride  
 Ere we may think her ripe to be a bride.

*Paris* Younger than she are happy mothers made.

*Capulet* And too soon marred<sup>7</sup> are those so early made.

The earth hath swallowed all my hopes<sup>8</sup> but she:

15 She is the hopeful<sup>9</sup> lady of my earth.<sup>10</sup>

But woo her, gentle Paris, get her heart.

My will to her consent is but a part.

1 (1) constrained, compelled, (2) under bond?

2 account, distinction

3 (1) supplication, request, (2) wooing, courting (paternal approval being primary)

4 newcomer

5 changing, succession, passing

6 shrivel, fade away

7 spoiled, injured, disfigured

8 expectations: children

9 full of/laden with hope

10 my earth = my life (and hopes)

An she agree, within<sup>11</sup> her scope<sup>12</sup> of choice  
 Lies my consent and fair according<sup>13</sup> voice.  
 This night I hold an old accustomed feast<sup>14</sup> 20  
 Whereto<sup>15</sup> I have invited many a guest,  
 Such as I love – and you among<sup>16</sup> the store,<sup>17</sup>  
 One more, most welcome, makes my number<sup>18</sup> more.  
 At my poor house look<sup>19</sup> to behold this night  
 Earth-treading<sup>20</sup> stars that make dark heaven light.<sup>21</sup> 25  
 Such comfort<sup>22</sup> as do lusty<sup>23</sup> young men feel  
 When well appareled<sup>24</sup> April on the heel  
 Of limping<sup>25</sup> Winter treads, even such delight  
 Among fresh fennel<sup>26</sup> buds shall you this night  
 Inherit<sup>27</sup> at my house. Hear all, all see, 30  
 And like her most whose merit most shall be,  
 Which, on more view of many, mine,<sup>28</sup> being one,  
 May stand in number,<sup>29</sup> though in reck'ning none.<sup>30</sup>

11 inside, in the limits of, contained within

12 sphere, range, freedom

13 agreeing, matching, harmonious

14 accustomed feast = customary/habitual gathering/entertainment/banquet\*

15 to which

16 you among = to add you to

17 company, abundance of persons

18 my number = the count of my guests

19 expect

20 walking, stepping, dancing

21 make dark heaven light = light up the dark sky

22 refreshment, invigoration, pleasure, delight

23 lively, merry, joyful

24 clothed, adorned (winter being bare, and April marking the coming of spring)

25 lame (by April, winter is old and enfeebled, ready to die)

26 savory herb with yellow flowers (some texts have “female”)

27 receive, take possession of

28 my daughter (Juliet)

29 stand in number = stand out/be first/number one among them?

30 though in reck'ning none = though in the mathematics of probability one is not strictly speaking a number



Come, go with me.<sup>31</sup>

(to *Servant*, giving him a paper)

Go, sirrah,<sup>32</sup> trudge<sup>33</sup> about<sup>34</sup>

35 Through fair Verona. Find those persons out  
Whose names are written there, and to them say  
My house and welcome on their pleasure stay.<sup>35</sup>

EXEUNT CAPULET AND PARIS

*Servant* Find them out whose names are written here? It is  
written that the shoemaker should meddle<sup>36</sup> with his yard<sup>37</sup>  
40 and the tailor with his last,<sup>38</sup> the fisher with his pencil and the  
painter with his nets. But I am sent to find those persons  
whose names are here writ, and can never find<sup>39</sup> what names  
the writing person hath here writ. I must to<sup>40</sup> the learnèd. In  
good time!

ENTER BENVOLIO AND ROMEO

45 *Benvolio* Tut, man, one fire burns out another's burning,  
One pain is lessened by another's<sup>41</sup> anguish.

31 come GO with ME (the first two feet of an iambic pentameter line)

32 (used for low-ranking men and boys instead of "sir," indicating authority or rebuke)\*

33 (undignified word for "walking")

34 go SIRrah TRUDGE aABOUT (the last three feet of the same iambic pentameter line: a spatial break is not necessarily a metrical break)

35 tarry, await\*

36 be concerned, busy himself with

37 yardstick (measuring rod – which a shoemaker of course does not use: the servant's "confusion" seems deliberate, intended by him to emphasize the foolishness of sending an illiterate on such an errand)

38 wooden model of the foot

39 discover, learn

40 must to = must go to

41 another pain's

- Turn giddy,<sup>42</sup> and be holp<sup>43</sup> by backward turning.<sup>44</sup>  
 One desperate<sup>45</sup> grief cures with another's languish.<sup>46</sup>  
 Take thou some new infection to thy eye,<sup>47</sup>  
 And the rank<sup>48</sup> poison of the old will die. 50
- Romeo* Your<sup>49</sup> plantain<sup>50</sup> leaf is excellent for that.  
*Benvolio* For what, I pray thee?  
*Romeo* For your broken<sup>51</sup> shin.  
*Benvolio* Why, Romeo, art thou mad?  
*Romeo* Not mad, but bound<sup>52</sup> more than a madman is,  
 Shut up in prison, kept without my food, 55  
 Whipped and tormented and – (*seeing Servant*) God den,<sup>53</sup>  
 good fellow.<sup>54</sup>  
*Servant* God gi' go den. I pray,<sup>55</sup> sir, can you read?  
*Romeo* Ay, mine own fortune<sup>56</sup> in my misery.

42 (1) light-headed, frivolous, (2) whirling in circles

43 helped

44 backward turning = facing the opposite way

45 dangerous, reckless, virtually hopeless\*

46 sickness, decline, wasting away, suffering

47 (In *Rime Sparse*, 3.1304–74, foundation and source of Renaissance European love theory, Petrarch wrote of “the pathway from eyes to heart,” along which the instantly irresistible force of love travels. One look and the lover has fallen; one mutual look, and love sweeps both lovers away.)

48 strong, violent, excessive

49 “the” rather than modern “your” (see Romeo’s next speech for yet another such usage)

50 a low-growing herbal plant with broad, flat leaves, rather than the tropical tree with banana-like fruit

51 torn, bruised, wounded

52 fastened down, tied up

53 God den = good evening (“God give you good even”)\*

54 (customary form of address, in speaking to someone of humble station, a “common” person)

55 ask earnestly and politely

56 future

*Servant* Perhaps you have learned it without book.<sup>57</sup> But I pray,  
60 can you read anything you see?

*Romeo* Ay, if I know the letters and the language.

*Servant* Ye say honestly.<sup>58</sup> Rest you merry!<sup>59</sup>

*Romeo* Stay, fellow; I can read.

## HE READS THE LETTER

“Signior Martino and his wife and daughters;  
65 County Anselmo and his beauteous sisters;  
The lady widow of Vitruvio;  
Signior Placentio and his lovely nieces;  
Mercutio and his brother Valentine;  
Mine uncle Capulet, his wife and daughters;  
70 My fair niece Rosaline, and Livia;  
Signior Valentio and his cousin Tybalt;  
Lucio and the lively Helena.”

## GIVES BACK THE PAPER

A fair<sup>60</sup> assembly. Whither should they come?

*Servant* Up.

75 *Romeo* Whither?

*Servant* To supper, to our house.

*Romeo* Whose house?

*Servant* My master's.

*Romeo* Indeed I should have asked you that before.

80 *Servant* Now I'll tell you without asking. My master is the great

57 without book = by heart

58 decently, worthily, without falseness

59 rest you merry = may you be merry/happy

60 fine, elegant

rich Capulet and if you be not of the house of Montagues,  
I pray come and crush<sup>61</sup> a cup of wine. Rest you merry.

EXIT

- Benvolio* At this same ancient<sup>62</sup> feast of Capulet's  
Supps the fair Rosaline whom thou so lov'st,  
With all the admired beauties of Verona. 85  
Go thither, and with unattainted<sup>63</sup> eye  
Compare her face with some that I shall show,  
And I will make thee think thy swan a crow.
- Romeo* When the devout religion of mine eye<sup>64</sup>  
Maintains such falsehood, then<sup>65</sup> turn tears to fires, 90  
And these<sup>66</sup> who, often drowned,<sup>67</sup> could never die,<sup>68</sup>  
Transparent<sup>69</sup> heretics, be<sup>70</sup> burnt for liars.  
One fairer than my love? The all-seeing sun  
Ne'er<sup>71</sup> saw her match since first the world begun.
- Benvolio* Tut! You saw her fair, none else being by, 95  
Herself poised with herself in either eye.<sup>72</sup>  
But in that<sup>73</sup> crystal scales<sup>74</sup> let there be weighed

61 drink

62 ("old" in the sense of "traditional")

63 unspotted, free from blemish, clear

64 (see act 1, scene 2, note 47)

65 then let

66 those

67 in tears

68 (1) die (literally), (2) experience sexual orgasm

69 obvious

70 let them be

71 never\*

72 herself poised with herself in either eye = Rosaline measured/balanced  
against herself in each of your two eyes

73 those

74 crystal scales = Romeo's eyes

Your lady's love<sup>75</sup> against some other maid

That I will show you shining at this feast,

100 And she<sup>76</sup> shall scant show<sup>77</sup> well that now seems best.

*Romeo* I'll go along,<sup>78</sup> no such sight to be shown,

But to rejoice in splendor of my own.<sup>79</sup>

EXEUNT

75 your lady's love = your love of this lady

76 the one (literally, the one "she")

77 scant show = hardly/barely seem/appear

78 go along = accompany you

79 splendor of my own = my own lady love's splendor

SCENE 3  
*Capulet's house*

ENTER LADY CAPULET AND NURSE

*Lady Capulet* Nurse, where's my daughter? Call her forth<sup>1</sup> to me.

*Nurse* Now, by my maidenhead at twelve year old,<sup>2</sup>  
I bade<sup>3</sup> her come. What, lamb! what, ladybird!<sup>4</sup>  
God forbid. Where's this girl? What,<sup>5</sup> Juliet!

ENTER JULIET

*Juliet* How now?<sup>6</sup> Who calls?

*Nurse* Your mother.

*Juliet* Madam,

I'm here.

5

What is your will?

*Lady Capulet* This is the matter<sup>7</sup> – Nurse, give leave<sup>8</sup> awhile,  
We must talk in secret. (*Nurse starts to leave*) Nurse, come back  
again.

I have remembered me, thou's<sup>9</sup> hear our counsel.<sup>10</sup>

Thou knowest my daughter's of a pretty<sup>11</sup> age.

10

1 (1) out, (2) at once

2 (she can swear by it at twelve – but not thereafter)

3 urged, begged

4 sweetheart

5 well!/now!/hey!

6 how now = why

7 subject, theme, substance\*

8 give leave = please leave

9 thou's = you are supposed to/must ("thou shalt")

10 consultation, exchange of opinions, conversation

11 fine, proper, pleasing

*Nurse* Faith, I can tell her age unto an hour.

*Lady Capulet* She's not fourteen.

*Nurse* I'll lay<sup>12</sup> fourteen of my teeth –

And yet, to my teen<sup>13</sup> be it spoken, I have but four –

She is not fourteen. How long is it now

To Lammas-tide?<sup>14</sup>

15 *Lady Capulet* A fortnight<sup>15</sup> and odd<sup>16</sup> days.

*Nurse* Even or odd,<sup>17</sup> of all days in the year,

Come Lammas Eve at night shall she be fourteen.

Susan<sup>18</sup> and she (God rest all Christian souls)

Were of an age. Well, Susan is with God,

20 She was too good for me. But as I said,

On Lammas Eve at night shall she be fourteen.<sup>19</sup>

That shall she. Marry, I remember it well.

'Tis since the earthquake now eleven years,

And she was weaned (I never shall forget it),

25 Of all the days of the year, upon that day,

For I had then laid wormwood to my dug,<sup>20</sup>

Sitting in the sun under the dovehouse<sup>21</sup> wall.

My lord and you were then at Mantua.

12 bet

13 sorrow, affliction

14 August 1 (harvest festival for early wheat crop: "Lammas wheat" = winter wheat)

15 two weeks ("fourteen" nights)

16 and odd = plus a few days over fourteen

17 (a pun on "odd" as just defined and "odd" as opposed to "even"?)

18 (the Nurse's dead daughter)

19 on LAMmas EVE at NIGHT shall SHE be fourTEEN (iambic pentameter is neither mechanical nor rigid)

20 laid wormwood to my dug = placed bitter herb on my nipple

21 pigeon house

Nay, I do bear<sup>22</sup> a brain. But as I said,  
 When it<sup>23</sup> did taste the wormwood on the nipple 30  
 Of my dug and felt it bitter,<sup>24</sup> pretty fool,<sup>25</sup>  
 To see it tetchy<sup>26</sup> and fall out<sup>27</sup> with the dug!  
 Shake,<sup>28</sup> quoth<sup>29</sup> the dovehouse!<sup>30</sup> 'Twas no need, I trow,<sup>31</sup>  
 To bid me trudge.<sup>32</sup>  
 And since that time it is eleven years, 35  
 For then she could stand high lone.<sup>33</sup> Nay, by th' rood,<sup>34</sup>  
 She could have run and waddled<sup>35</sup> all about,  
 For even the day before she broke<sup>36</sup> her brow,<sup>37</sup>  
 And then my husband – God be with his soul,  
 'A<sup>38</sup> was a merry man – took up<sup>39</sup> the child. 40  
 “Yea,” quoth he, “dost thou fall upon thy face?  
 Thou wilt fall backward<sup>40</sup> when thou hast more wit,  
 Wilt thou not, Jule?” and, by my holiday, <sup>41</sup>

22 (1) have, (2) still have (though old)

23 the baby

24 of my DUG and FELT it BITter

25 (term of endearment/pity, especially in speaking to/of children)

26 quickly irritable/annoyed

27 fall out = quarrel, disagree (verb)

28 get moving!

29 said

30 (the wall thereof shook, when the child started)

31 believe, expect, hope (“I can tell you”)

32 go away, be off

33 high lone = alone, by herself

34 the cross on which Christ was crucified

35 swaying from one leg to the other, like a duck

36 cut

37 forehead

38 he\*

39 took up = caught/lifted up

40 fall backward = have sexual intercourse

41 holy relic/place (variant spelling of “halidom,” from Old English)



- The pretty wretch<sup>42</sup> left<sup>43</sup> crying, and said “Ay.”  
 45 To see now how a jest shall come about.<sup>44</sup>  
 I warrant,<sup>45</sup> an I should live a thousand years,  
 I never should forget it. “Wilt thou not, Jule?” quoth he,  
 And, pretty fool,<sup>46</sup> it stinted<sup>47</sup> and said “Ay.”  
*Lady Capulet* Enough of this. I pray thee hold thy peace.  
 50 *Nurse* Yes, madam. Yet I cannot choose but laugh  
 To think it should leave crying and say “Ay.”  
 And yet, I warrant, it had upon its brow  
 A bump as big as a young cock’rel’s stone,<sup>48</sup>  
 A perilous knock,<sup>49</sup> and it cried bitterly.  
 55 “Yea,” quoth my husband, “fall’st upon thy face?  
 Thou wilt fall backward when thou comest to age.<sup>50</sup>  
 Wilt thou not, Jule?” It stinted, and said “Ay.”  
*Juliet* And stint thou too, I pray thee, Nurse, say I.  
*Nurse* Peace, I have done. God mark<sup>51</sup> thee to his grace,  
 60 Thou wast the prettiest babe that e’er I nursed.  
 An I might live to see thee married once,<sup>52</sup>  
 I have my wish.

---

“haligdom,” meaning “sanctity/sanctuary”: halig = holy, dom = custom, power, glory)

42 pretty wretch = fine little person/creature

43 stopped

44 come about = come true

45 promise, pledge\*

46 pretty fool = nice little innocent

47 stopped

48 young cock’rel’s stone = (1) young cock’s testicle, (2) young man’s testicle

49 perilous knock = serious blow/thump

50 to age = old enough

51 God mark = may God set/make/identify

52 at some/any time

- Lady Capulet* Marry, that “marry” is the very<sup>53</sup> theme  
I came to talk of. Tell me, daughter Juliet,  
How stands your disposition<sup>54</sup> to be married? 65
- Juliet* It is an honor that I dream not of.
- Nurse* An honor? Were not I thine only nurse,  
I would say thou hadst sucked wisdom from thy teat.
- Lady Capulet* Well, think of marriage now.<sup>55</sup> Younger than you,  
Here in Verona, ladies of esteem,<sup>56</sup> 70  
Are made already mothers. By my count,  
I was your mother much upon<sup>57</sup> these years  
That you are now a maid.<sup>58</sup> Thus then in brief:<sup>59</sup>  
The valiant<sup>60</sup> Paris seeks you for his love.
- Nurse* A man, young lady! Lady, such a man 75  
As all the world – why he’s a man of wax.<sup>61</sup>
- Lady Capulet* Verona’s summer hath not such a flower.
- Nurse* Nay, he’s a flower, in faith – a very<sup>62</sup> flower.
- Lady Capulet* What say you? Can you love the gentleman?  
This night you shall behold him at our feast. 80  
Read o’er the volume<sup>63</sup> of young Paris’ face  
And find delight writ there with beauty’s pen.

53 same, exact

54 bent of mind

55 think of marriage now = *now* think about marriage

56 ladies of esteem = reputable/well-respected ladies

57 much upon = approximately at

58 unmarried woman, virgin\*

59 in brief = briefly, shortly, in a few words

60 (1) brave, courageous, (2) rich

61 man of wax = man of perfect figure/stature (a “model”)

62 true, real\*

63 book

- Examine every married lineament<sup>64</sup>  
 And see how one another lends content<sup>65</sup> –  
 85 And what obscured<sup>66</sup> in this fair volume lies  
 Find written in the margent<sup>67</sup> of his eyes.  
 This precious book of love, this unbound<sup>68</sup> lover,  
 To beautify him only lacks a cover.<sup>69</sup>  
 The fish lives in the sea, and 'tis much pride  
 90 For fair without<sup>70</sup> the fair within to hide.<sup>71</sup>  
 That book<sup>72</sup> in many's eyes doth share the glory<sup>73</sup>  
 That in gold clasps<sup>74</sup> locks in the golden story.<sup>75</sup>  
 So shall you share all that he doth possess  
 By having him,<sup>76</sup> making yourself no less.<sup>77</sup>  
 95 *Nurse* No less? Nay, bigger. Women grow by men.<sup>78</sup>

64 married lineament = joined/harmonious feature

65 one another lends content = one lends substance to another

66 hidden

67 comment written/printed in the margins

68 not tied up, (the pages) unrestrained/not secured

69 that which encloses (a book's cover), which shelters (body cover – armor, clothing), which supports (a wife!)

70 outside

71 the fish lives . . . to hide = just as the fish by its very nature lives in the sea, and shields/protects the fish that swim in it, so too it is a source of honest pride for one who is fair on the outside (a woman) to shield/protect one who is fair inside (a man)

72 the man

73 admiration, praise

74 gold clasps (noun) = gold fastenings (as costly books were then often so bound)

75 locks in the golden story = encloses/secures/confines the golden life (“story/history”)

76 having him = (1) possessing him, (2) accepting him/his proposal of marriage (“will you have me?” spoken by a man to a woman, meant “will you marry me?”)

77 no less = no less esteemed/worthy

78 (by being made pregnant)

*Lady Capulet* Speak briefly, can you like of<sup>79</sup> Paris' love?

*Juliet* I'll look to like,<sup>80</sup> if looking liking move,<sup>81</sup>

But no more deep will I endart<sup>82</sup> mine eye

Than your consent gives strength<sup>83</sup> to make it<sup>84</sup> fly.

ENTER SERVINGMAN

*Servingman* Madam, the guests are come, supper served up, 100

you called, my young lady asked for, the Nurse cursed in the  
pantry,<sup>85</sup> and everything in extremity. I must hence to wait.

I beseech you follow straight.<sup>86</sup>

*Lady Capulet* We follow thee.

EXIT SERVINGMAN

Juliet, the County<sup>87</sup> stays.<sup>88</sup>

*Nurse* Go, girl, seek happy nights to<sup>89</sup> happy days. 105

EXEUNT

79 like of = approve, be pleased by

80 look to like = take care/be sure to consider/find out if I like (him/his proposal)

81 if looking liking move = if looking makes me want to like

82 pierce with my eye (the effect of which is discussed in act 1, scene 2, note 47: the usual meaning of "dart" is "arrow," which is Cupid's weapon)

83 power, force

84 (the antecedent of "it" is "mine eye," though the modern sense of "mine eye" is "my eyes")

85 storeroom for food and often for table linen and dishes (in the first line of act 4, scene 4, the Nurse is given keys to the pantry; her absence therefrom is probably why she is being cursed)

86 directly, at once\* (though always printed as prose, this speech constitutes four iambic pentameter lines and contains two vivid internal rhymes, "nurse cursed" and "wait . . . straight.")

87 Count (equivalent of Earl)

88 waits

89 leading to? in addition to? accompanying, in accord with? connected to?

## SCENE 4

*A street*

ENTER ROMEO, MERCUTIO, BENVOLIO, WITH FIVE OR SIX  
OTHER MASKERS, AND TORCHBEARERS

*Romeo* What, shall this speech be spoke<sup>1</sup> for our excuse?

Or shall we on<sup>2</sup> without apology?

*Benvolio* The date is out of such prolixity.<sup>3</sup>

We'll have no Cupid hoodwinked<sup>4</sup> with a scarf,<sup>5</sup>

5 Bearing a Tartar's<sup>6</sup> painted bow<sup>7</sup> of lath,<sup>8</sup>

Scaring the ladies like a crowkeeper,<sup>9</sup>

Nor no without book<sup>10</sup> prologue, faintly<sup>11</sup> spoke

After the prompter,<sup>12</sup> for our entrance.<sup>13</sup>

But let them measure<sup>14</sup> us by what they will,

10 We'll measure<sup>15</sup> them a measure,<sup>16</sup> and be gone.

1 speech . . . spoke (convention called for maskers, who were usually intruders, not invited/expected, to deliver a speech, flattering/propitiating the host and the invited guests)

2 proceed

3 the date is out of such prolixity = the custom of delivering a prolix speech is now out of date

4 blindfolded, and thus in effect blinded (as Cupid was often thought to be)

5 band, usually of silk

6 Central Asian

7 painted bow = something not a bow but painted to look like one

8 of lath = made of thin, narrow strips of wood

9 (1) scarecrow carrying a bow, (2) a field hand/boy hired to frighten crows

10 without book (adjectival) = memorized (as opposed to extemporaneous)

11 softly, hesitantly, uncertainly

12 after the prompter = following a prompter's reminders

13 for our entrance = as/in place of our invitations/right to enter  
(ENterANCE)

14 (1) look us up and down, (2) evaluate, appraise

15 give

16 dance\*

*Romeo* Give me a torch. I am not for this ambling.<sup>17</sup>

Being but heavy,<sup>18</sup> I will bear<sup>19</sup> the light.

*Mercutio* Nay, gentle Romeo, we must have you dance.

*Romeo* Not I, believe me. You have dancing shoes

With nimble<sup>20</sup> soles, I have a soul of lead

15

So stakes<sup>21</sup> me to the ground I cannot move.

*Mercutio* You are a lover. Borrow Cupid's wings

And soar with them above a common bound.<sup>22</sup>

*Romeo* I am too sore enpiercèd<sup>23</sup> with his shaft<sup>24</sup>

To soar with his light feathers,<sup>25</sup> and so bound<sup>26</sup>

20

I cannot bound a pitch above<sup>27</sup> dull<sup>28</sup> woe.

Under love's heavy burden do I sink.

*Mercutio* And, to sink in it, should you burden<sup>29</sup> love?

Too great oppression for a tender thing.<sup>30</sup>

*Romeo* Is love a tender thing? It is too rough,

25

Too rude,<sup>31</sup> too boist'rous,<sup>32</sup> and it pricks like thorn.

*Mercutio* If love be rough with you, be rough with love.

17 easy-paced, sometimes artificial walking/dancing

18 oppressed, sorrowful

19 carry

20 quick, swift, agile, light

21 so stakes = which so fastens

22 (1) limit, (2) leap

23 sore enpiercèd = painfully/severely penetrated/run through

24 rod forming the body of an arrow

25 with his light feathers = as he does with the light feathers of his wings

26 fastened, tied down (adjective)

27 bound (verb) a pitch above = leap higher than

28 slow, stupid, sluggish, drowsy

29 (1) load, oppress, (2) criticize

30 a tender thing = (1) love, (2) a woman, bearing his weight in sexual intercourse (as he "sinks in" to her), (3) a woman's genitals

31 uncultivated, barbarous, harsh, violent\*

32 (1) stiff, coarse, unyielding, (2) truculent, fierce, violent

- Prick love for pricking,<sup>33</sup> and you beat love down.<sup>34</sup>  
 Give me a case<sup>35</sup> to put my visage<sup>36</sup> in.  
 30 A visor for a visor!<sup>37</sup> What care I  
 What curious<sup>38</sup> eye doth quote<sup>39</sup> deformities?  
 Here<sup>40</sup> are the beetle brows<sup>41</sup> shall blush for me.  
*Benvolio* Come, knock and enter, and no sooner in  
 But every man betake him<sup>42</sup> to his legs.<sup>43</sup>  
 35 *Romeo* A torch for me. Let wantons<sup>44</sup> light of heart  
 Tickle<sup>45</sup> the senseless<sup>46</sup> rushes<sup>47</sup> with their heels,  
 For I am proverbed<sup>48</sup> with a grandsire phrase:<sup>49</sup>  
 I'll be a candle holder<sup>50</sup> and look on.  
 The game<sup>51</sup> was ne'er so fair,<sup>52</sup> and I am done.<sup>53</sup>

33 (1) painfully sticking, (2) sexual intercourse (then as now the noun “prick” = vulgar term for penis)

34 beat love down = overthrow/force down love

35 holder, sheath

36 my visage = my assumed/pretend face/appearance (his mask)

37 a visor for a visor = a mask (disguise) for a mask (his face)

38 careful, attentive, fussy

39 mark, observe, scrutinize

40 in this mask

41 beetle brows = black, jutting eyebrows

42 commit himself, resort

43 to his legs = dance

44 those free of care/given to unrestrained merriment, frisky

45 poke, touch, stir up

46 incapable of feeling

47 dry reeds spread on floors

48 furnished with a proverb

49 grandsire phrase = proverb as old as a grandfather

50 “If a man does not know how to play at cards, it is kind of him to hold the candle”

51 (1) amusement, fun, (2) amorous play/sport

52 ne'er so fair = never so fair as it is now (and that being so, it is time to give it up)

53 finished, used up

- Mercutio* Tut! Dun's the mouse, the constable's own word.<sup>54</sup> 40  
 If thou art Dun,<sup>55</sup> we'll draw thee from the mire<sup>56</sup>  
 Of – save your reverence<sup>57</sup> – love, wherein thou stick'st<sup>58</sup>  
 Up to the ears. Come, we burn daylight,<sup>59</sup> ho!
- Romeo* Nay, that's not so.
- Mercutio* I mean, sir, in delay  
 We waste our lights<sup>60</sup> in vain, like lamps by<sup>61</sup> day. 45  
 Take our good meaning,<sup>62</sup> for our judgment sits<sup>63</sup>  
 Five times in that<sup>64</sup> ere<sup>65</sup> once in our five wits.<sup>66</sup>
- Romeo* And we mean<sup>67</sup> well, in going to this masque.  
 But 'tis no wit<sup>68</sup> to go.

54 Dun's the mouse, the constable's own word = a mouse is brown, and proverbially quiet, like an officer of the peace (Romeo has just said he is "done")

55 (Mercutio swiftly changes directions, referring now to Dun the horse in an old Christmas game: those playing the game try to pull a large, heavy log, supposed to be Dun the horse, out of an imaginary mire)

56 (1) boggy/swampy ground, (2) dirt, filth, dung

57 save your reverence = excuse me (Mercutio apologizes – or pretends to – for using so obscene and dirty a word as "mire" to describe love: some texts have "sirreverence," with the same meaning, but "sirreverence" can also mean human excrement/dung)

58 are stuck

59 burn daylight = delay, waste time

60 (1) torches, (2) feelings, (3) capacities ("lights" also = the lungs: waste our lights = waste our breath, jabbering like this)

61 lit/burning in daylight

62 take our good meaning = choose/understand our/my correct meaning (instead of pretending, as Romeo clearly does, that he does not understand)

63 judgment sits = deliberate opinion/good sense is located/can be found

64 five times in that = five times as much in that good meaning

65 in preference to, rather than in

66 once in our five wits = one time in what we learn via our five senses ("wits")

67 intend (Romeo changes verbal direction every bit as swiftly, and lightly, as does Mercutio)

68 not sensible/wise/clever



*Mercutio* Why, may one ask?

*Romeo* I dreamt a dream tonight.<sup>69</sup>

50 *Mercutio* And so did I.

*Romeo* Well, what was yours?

*Mercutio* That dreamers often lie.

*Romeo* In bed asleep, while they do dream things true.

*Mercutio* O, then I see Queen Mab<sup>70</sup> hath been with you.

She is the fairies' midwife,<sup>71</sup> and she comes

55 In shape no bigger than an agate stone

On the forefinger of an alderman,<sup>72</sup>

Drawn<sup>73</sup> with a team of little atomies

Athwart<sup>74</sup> men's noses as they lie asleep —<sup>75</sup>

Her wagon spokes made of long spinners'<sup>76</sup> legs,

60 The cover,<sup>77</sup> of the wings of grasshoppers;

Her traces,<sup>78</sup> of the smallest spider's web;

Her collars,<sup>79</sup> of the moonshine's wat'ry<sup>80</sup> beams;

Her whip, of cricket's bone; the lash,<sup>81</sup> of film;<sup>82</sup>

69 last night

70 (an invented personage, probably meant to be “mythological/fairy”; but mab = slut, whore)

71 (it is she, among the fairies, who “delivers” their dreams to humans)

72 (the figures of diminutive persons were cut into agate stones, mounted on rings used for affixing seals on letters and other documents; aldermen were headmen/governors of trade organizations and municipal districts)

73 (Mab is drawn by a team of tiny creatures the size of atoms)

74 across

75 (the next eleven lines are differently ordered in some texts)

76 spiders'

77 outer covering of the wheels

78 straps/ropes connecting the collar of the drawing/pulling animal to the whiffletree/crossbar of the vehicle

79 her “horses”/draft animals' collars

80 (1) moist, (2) thin, (3) pale

81 flexible tip of a whip

82 membrane, filament, gossamer (spider webs?)

Her wagoner, a small gray-coated<sup>83</sup> gnat,  
 Not half so big as a round little worm 65  
 Pricked from the lazy finger of a maid;<sup>84</sup>  
 Her chariot is an empty hazelnut,  
 Made by the joiner<sup>85</sup> squirrel or old grub,<sup>86</sup>  
 Time out o' mind the fairies' coachmakers.  
 And in this state<sup>87</sup> she gallops night by night 70  
 Through lovers' brains, and then they dream of love;  
 O'er courtiers'<sup>88</sup> knees, that dream on curtsies<sup>89</sup> straight;<sup>90</sup>  
 O'er lawyers' fingers, who straight dream on fees;  
 O'er ladies' lips, who straight on kisses dream,  
 Which<sup>91</sup> oft the angry Mab with blisters plagues,<sup>92</sup> 75  
 Because their breaths with sweetmeats<sup>93</sup> tainted<sup>94</sup> are.  
 Sometime she gallops o'er a courtier's nose,  
 And then dreams he of smelling out a suit;<sup>95</sup>  
 And sometime comes she with a tithe pig's<sup>96</sup> tail  
 Tickling a parson's nose as 'a lies asleep, 80  
 Then dreams he of another benefice.<sup>97</sup>

83 gray-coated = a uniform? a reference to traditional homespun cloth?

84 serving maid (lazy serving maids were said to breed tiny worms in their fingers)

85 cabinetmaker

86 (squirrels *gnaw*; worm grubs *bore*)

87 pomp, splendor, exalted position/rank, greatness

88 those who congregate at a sovereign's court

89 gestures of respect, made by bending one's knees

90 without delay, immediately

91 who

92 (verb)

93 candies, cakes, etc.

94 contaminated, corrupted, stained

95 smelling out a suit = discovering some cause for a lawsuit? or a patron who will pay for his influence at court?

96 tithe pig = animal given as/in lieu of tithe money

97 salaried church post

Sometimes she driveth o'er a soldier's neck,  
 And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats,  
 Of breaches,<sup>98</sup> ambuscadoes,<sup>99</sup> Spanish blades,<sup>100</sup>  
 85 Of healths<sup>101</sup> five fathom deep; and then anon<sup>102</sup>  
 Drums<sup>103</sup> in his ear, at which he starts<sup>104</sup> and wakes,  
 And being thus frightened swears a prayer or two  
 And sleeps again. This is that very Mab  
 That plats<sup>105</sup> the manes of horses in the night  
 90 And bakes<sup>106</sup> the elflocks<sup>107</sup> in foul sluttish<sup>108</sup> hair,  
 Which once untangled much misfortune bodes.<sup>109</sup>  
 This is the hag,<sup>110</sup> when maids lie on their backs,  
 That presses them and learns<sup>111</sup> them first to bear,<sup>112</sup>  
 Making them women of good carriage.<sup>113</sup>  
 This is she –  
 95 *Romeo* Peace,<sup>114</sup> peace, Mercutio, peace!  
 Thou talk'st of nothing.  
*Mercutio* True, I talk of dreams,

98 breaks in fortified walls

99 ambushes

100 swords (made of superior steel)

101 alcoholic toasts/pledges

102 at once\*

103 she drums (verb)

104 is startled

105 plaits, intertwines

106 hardens, cakes

107 mass of tangled hair, caused in one's sleep by malicious elves

108 dirty, untidy

109 forebodes, promises (because it will anger the elves?)

110 female evil spirit/demon

111 instructs, teaches

112 (1) bear a lover's weight, (2) behave, walk, (3) bear children

113 of good carriage = of good bearing/capacity to carry

114 enough! quiet!

Which are the children of an idle<sup>115</sup> brain,  
 Begot<sup>116</sup> of nothing but vain<sup>117</sup> fantasy,<sup>118</sup>  
 Which is as thin of substance<sup>119</sup> as the air,  
 And more inconstant than the wind, who woos 100  
 Even now the frozen bosom<sup>120</sup> of the North  
 And, being angered,<sup>121</sup> puffs<sup>122</sup> away from thence,  
 Turning his face<sup>123</sup> to the dew-dropping South.

*Benvolio* This wind you talk of blows us from ourselves.<sup>124</sup>

Supper is done, and we shall come too late. 105

*Romeo* I fear too early; for my mind misgives<sup>125</sup>

Some consequence,<sup>126</sup> yet hanging<sup>127</sup> in the stars,<sup>128</sup>

Shall bitterly begin his<sup>129</sup> fearful<sup>130</sup> date

With this night's revels and expire<sup>131</sup> the term

Of a despised life, closed<sup>132</sup> in my breast, 110

By some vile forfeit<sup>133</sup> of untimely<sup>134</sup> death.

115 empty, vacant\*

116 generated, created

117 empty, vacant, worthless

118 illusory/imaginary appearance

119 solid/real matter\*

120 seat of emotions/desires, heart

121 (because it is frozen/cold)

122 blows abruptly/quickly/hard

123 (some texts have "side")

124 from ourselves = away from our purpose/direction

125 suggests, fears

126 future result/event

127 yet hanging = even now pending

128 astrologically/fatefully determined

129 its

130 dreadful, terrible, awful

131 finish, end, conclude

132 shut, contained

133 vile forfeit = (1)base/low/horrid/despicable penalty, (2)contractually agreed-upon large additional penalty (for nonpayment)

134 premature\*

But he that hath the steerage<sup>135</sup> of my course<sup>136</sup>

Direct my sail! On, lusty gentlemen!

*Benvolio* Strike, drum.<sup>137</sup>

THEY MARCH TO ONE SIDE OF THE STAGE, AND STAND THERE

135 steering, guidance

136 path, direction of onward movement\*

137 drummer (a man leading the celebrants)

## SCENE 5

*Capulet's house*SERVINGMEN COME FORTH WITH NAPKINS<sup>1</sup>

*First Servingman* Where's Potpan, that he helps not to take away? He shift<sup>2</sup> a trencher!<sup>3</sup> He scrape<sup>4</sup> a trencher!

*Second Servingman* When good manners shall lie all in one or two men's hands, and they unwashed too, 'tis a foul thing.

*First Servingman* Away with the joint stools,<sup>5</sup> remove the court cupboard,<sup>6</sup> look to<sup>7</sup> the plate.<sup>8</sup> Good<sup>9</sup> thou, save me a piece of marchpane<sup>10</sup> and, as thou loves me, let<sup>11</sup> the porter let in Susan Grindstone and Nell. – (*calling*) Anthony and Potpan!

<sup>12</sup>*Second Servingman* Ay, boy, ready.

*First Servingman* You are looked for and called for, asked for and sought for, in the great chamber.<sup>13</sup>

*Third Servingman* We cannot be here and there too.

1 “‘It is equally impolite to lick greasy fingers or to wipe them on one’s tunic,’ wrote Erasmus in 1530. ‘You should wipe them with the napkin or on the tablecloth.’” Visser, *The Rituals of Dinner*, 163

2 arrange, distribute

3 flat wooden platters, in the next century replaced by plates

4 scrape off, clean

5 joint stools = stools professionally made by a joiner/cabinetmaker

6 court cupboard = sideboard

7 look to = (1) attend to, take care of, (2) be careful of\*

8 silver or gold utensils

9 (friendly/familiar)

10 marzipan

11 cause

12 (this and the next two speeches are attributed differently in some texts)

13 great chamber = main hall?

15 Cheerly,<sup>14</sup> boys! Be brisk<sup>15</sup> awhile,<sup>16</sup> and the longer liver take  
all.<sup>17</sup>

ENTER CAPULET, LADY CAPULET, JULIET, TYBALT,  
NURSE, GUESTS, AND GENTLEWOMEN

*Capulet* (to Maskers) Welcome, gentlemen. Ladies that have  
their toes

Unplagued<sup>18</sup> with corns will walk a bout<sup>19</sup> with you.

Ah, my mistresses,<sup>20</sup> which of you all

Will now deny to<sup>21</sup> dance? She that makes dainty,<sup>22</sup>

20 She I'll swear hath corns.<sup>23</sup> Am I come near<sup>24</sup> ye now?

(to Maskers) Welcome, gentlemen. I have seen the day

That I have worn a visor<sup>25</sup> and could tell

A whispering tale in a fair lady's ear,

Such as would please. 'Tis gone, 'tis gone, 'tis gone.

25 You are welcome, gentlemen. Come, musicians, play.

MUSIC. THEY DANCE

A hall, a hall!<sup>26</sup> Give room! And foot it,<sup>27</sup> girls.

14 (1) lively, (2) cheerily

15 quick, active

16 for a short time

17 the longer liver take all = enjoy yourselves, make the most of the present  
(proverbial)

18 not cursed/afflicted

19 walk a bout = move/make a turn/circuit

20 my mistresses = my ladies ("mistress": polite form of address)

21 deny to = refuse to

22 reluctant, disinclined

23 bunions

24 am I come near = have I come close to/ reached/ touched

25 mask

26 a hall! = make room, clear the floor

27 foot it = on with the dancing

More light, you knaves,<sup>28</sup> and turn the tables up,<sup>29</sup>  
 And quench the fire, the room is grown too hot.  
 (to Capulet Old Man) Ah, sirrah, this unlooked-for sport<sup>30</sup>  
 comes<sup>31</sup> well.

Nay, sit, nay sit, good cousin Capulet, 30  
 For you and I are past our dancing days.  
 How long is't now since last yourself and I  
 Were in a mask?<sup>32</sup>

*Second Capulet* By'r Lady, thirty years.

*Capulet* What, man? 'Tis not so much, 'tis not so much.  
 'Tis since the nuptial<sup>33</sup> of Lucentio, 35  
 Come Pentecost<sup>34</sup> as quickly as it will,<sup>35</sup>  
 Some five-and-twenty years, and then we masked.

*Second Capulet* 'Tis more, 'tis more. His<sup>36</sup> son is older, sir,  
 His son is thirty.

*Capulet* Will you tell me that?  
 His son was but a ward<sup>37</sup> two years ago. 40

*Romeo* (to *Servingman*) What lady's that, which doth  
 enrich<sup>38</sup> the hand<sup>39</sup>  
 Of yonder knight?

28 male servants

29 turn the tables up = lift the flat tops off their supporting trestles/sawhorses,  
 and stack them against the wall

30 entertainment, amusement, recreation

31 presents itself, arrives, happens, turns out

32 were in a mask = (1) wore a mask, (2) were at a masquerade dance

33 wedding

34 seventh Sunday after Easter ("Whitsuntide")

35 wants to

36 Lucentio's son

37 under age twenty-one, a minor

38 decorate, adorn

39 (the man's hand holding hers, presumably, in the course of dancing)



*Servingman* I know not, sir.

*Romeo* O she doth teach the torches to burn<sup>40</sup> bright.

45 It seems she hangs upon<sup>41</sup> the cheek of night  
 Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear<sup>42</sup> –  
 Beauty too rich<sup>43</sup> for use,<sup>44</sup> for earth too dear.<sup>45</sup>  
 So shows<sup>46</sup> a snowy dove trooping<sup>47</sup> with crows  
 As yonder lady o'er<sup>48</sup> her fellows shows.  
 50 The measure done, I'll watch her place of stand<sup>49</sup>  
 And, touching hers,<sup>50</sup> make blessèd my rude hand.  
 Did my heart love till now? Forswear<sup>51</sup> it, sight.  
 For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.<sup>52</sup>

*Tybalt* This, by his voice, should be a Montague.

55 (to *Servant*) Fetch me my rapier,<sup>53</sup> boy. What, dares the slave  
 Come hither, covered with an antic<sup>54</sup> face,  
 To flier<sup>55</sup> and scorn<sup>56</sup> at our solemnity?<sup>57</sup>  
 Now by the stock<sup>58</sup> and honor of my kin,

40 to burn = how properly to burn

41 hangs upon = is suspended on, decorates

42 (bright/glistening objects are seen more vividly against a dark background)

43 great, exalted, noble, splendid, fine, luxurious

44 for use = to be used/usefully employed

45 (1) precious, valuable, costly, (2) scarce, unusual

46 appears/is displayed/seen/exhibited

47 that flocks/gathers/associates with

48 higher than, beyond, in preference/comparison to

49 her place of stand = where she stands

50 her hand

51 renounce, repudiate

52 (for I ne'er SAW true BEAUty TILL this NIGHT)

53 light, sharp-pointed sword

54 grinning, fantastic (Romeo's mask)

55 jeer, gibe, laugh contemptuously

56 treat with ridicule, mock

57 ceremony, special formality, festival

58 line of descent, pedigree, genealogy

- To strike him dead I hold<sup>59</sup> it not a sin.
- Capulet* Why, how now, kinsman? Wherefore storm<sup>60</sup> you so? 60
- Tybalt* Uncle, this is a Montague, our foe,  
A villain that is hither come in spite<sup>61</sup>  
To scorn at our solemnity this night.
- Capulet* Young Romeo is it?
- Tybalt* 'Tis he, that villain Romeo.
- Capulet* Content thee,<sup>62</sup> gentle coz, let him alone. 65  
'A bears him like a portly<sup>63</sup> gentleman,  
And, to say truth, Verona brags of him  
To be a virtuous and well-governed<sup>64</sup> youth.  
I would not for the wealth of all this town  
Here in my house do him disparagement.<sup>65</sup> 70  
Therefore be patient, take no note of him.  
It is my will, the which if thou respect,  
Show a fair presence<sup>66</sup> and put off these frowns,  
An ill-beseeming semblance<sup>67</sup> for a feast.
- Tybalt* It fits when such a villain is a guest. 75  
I'll not endure him.
- Capulet* He shall be endured.  
What, goodman boy!<sup>68</sup> I say he shall. Go to!<sup>69</sup>

59 think, consider, believe\*

60 wherefore storm = why\* rage

61 envious malice/hatred, contemptuously

62 content thee = be satisfied

63 dignified

64 well-governed = reasonable

65 dishonor, indignity

66 appearance, bearing, demeanor

67 appearance

68 (used for people of rank lower than gentleman; "boy" also is deliberately insulting)

69 come on! (exclamation of incredulity and disapproval)

Am I the master here, or you? Go to!

You'll not endure him? God shall mend my soul!<sup>70</sup>

80 You'll make a mutiny<sup>71</sup> among my guests,

You will set cock-a-hoop,<sup>72</sup> you'll be the man!<sup>73</sup>

*Tybalt* Why, uncle, 'tis a shame.<sup>74</sup>

*Capulet* Go to, go to!

You are a saucy<sup>75</sup> boy. Is't so,<sup>76</sup> indeed?

This trick<sup>77</sup> may chance to scathe<sup>78</sup> you. I know what.<sup>79</sup>

85 You must contrary<sup>80</sup> me! Marry, 'tis time –

(*to Dancers*) Well said, my hearts!<sup>81</sup>—(*to Tybalt*) You are a  
princox,<sup>82</sup> go

Be quiet, or – (*to Servingmen*) More light, more light! – (*to  
Tybalt*) For shame!

I'll make you quiet. What! – (*to Dancers*) Cheerly, my hearts!

*Tybalt* Patience perforce<sup>83</sup> with wilful choler<sup>84</sup> meeting

90 Makes my flesh tremble in their different greeting.<sup>85</sup>

70 God shall mend my soul! = May God purify my soul! (emphatic exclamation)

71 quarrel, disturbance

72 set cock-a-hoop = cast off all restraint, set everything by the ears

73 be the man! = be in charge, give the orders

74 disgrace, dishonor

75 insolent, presumptuous\*

76 is't so? = is that the way it is?

77 prank, mischief, frolic

78 hurt, injure, damage

79 I know what = I understand what I'm doing, I'm not a fool/incompetent (I know WHAT) (and you don't!)

80 oppose, strive against (conTRARY)

81 (term of endearment)

82 conceited young man

83 (1) forcibly, (2) of necessity, under compulsion\*

84 wilful choler = obstinately self-willed/irrational/perverse temper/anger

85 in their different greeting = because of the totally unlike and clashing natures of patience and choler

I will withdraw. But this intrusion<sup>86</sup> shall,  
 Now seeming sweet, convert to<sup>87</sup> bitt' rest gall.<sup>88</sup>

EXIT

*Romeo* If I profane<sup>89</sup> with my unworthiest hand  
 This holy shrine,<sup>90</sup> the gentle sin is this:  
 My lips, two blushing<sup>91</sup> pilgrims,<sup>92</sup> ready stand 95  
 To smooth that<sup>93</sup> rough touch with a tender<sup>94</sup> kiss.

*Juliet* Good pilgrim, you do wrong<sup>95</sup> your hand too much,  
 Which<sup>96</sup> mannerly devotion<sup>97</sup> shows in this,  
 For saints<sup>98</sup> have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,  
 And palm to palm is holy palmers'<sup>99</sup> kiss. 100

*Romeo* Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?

*Juliet* Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.

*Romeo* O, then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do.  
 They pray: grant thou,<sup>100</sup> lest faith turn to despair.

*Juliet* Saints do not move,<sup>101</sup> though grant for prayers' 105

86 (Romeo's uninvited presence)

87 convert to = turn into

88 (1) rancor, (2) poison, venom

89 desecrate, pollute, treat irreverently

90 (her hand – which, as he had earlier said he would, he is now holding)

91 (1) reddish in color, (2) modest

92 (like religious pilgrims, he has sought out a sacred place)

93 (his own)

94 soft, gentle

95 (verb)

96 and that

97 mannerly devotion = decent/ moral/ modest and devout reverence/  
 impulse/observance/prayer

98 (1) holy persons, (2) those who are among the chosen, (3) statues of saints

99 pilgrims'

100 grant thou = that prayer (that I may kiss your lips)

101 (1) commence, start, (2) speak, (3) become agitated, disturbed, (4) move (if  
 "saints" means a statue)

sake.<sup>102</sup>

*Romeo* Then move not while my prayer's effect<sup>103</sup> I take.

Thus from my lips, by thine my sin is purged.<sup>104</sup> (*kisses her*)

*Juliet* Then<sup>105</sup> have my lips the sin that they have took.

*Romeo* Sin from my lips? O trespass<sup>106</sup> sweetly urged!<sup>107</sup>

Give me my sin again. (*kisses her*)

110 *Juliet* You kiss by th' book.<sup>108</sup>

*Nurse* Madam, your mother craves<sup>109</sup> a word with you.

*Romeo* What<sup>110</sup> is her mother?

*Nurse* Marry, bachelor,<sup>111</sup>

Her mother is the lady of the house,

And a good lady, and a wise and virtuous.

115 I nursed her daughter that you talked withal.<sup>112</sup>

I tell you, he that can lay hold of her

Shall have the chinks.<sup>113</sup>

*Romeo* Is she a Capulet?

O dear account.<sup>114</sup> My life is my foe's debt.<sup>115</sup>

102 though grant for prayer's sake = though they may, in response to a prayer, grant what is requested

103 result

104 cleansed, purified, absolved

105 as a result, now

106 sin, fault, wrong (noun)

107 brought forward, presented, stated

108 (1) book of manners, (2) book of sonnets (till the moment he kisses her, their dialogue is a sonnet)

109 (1) demands, claims by authority/right, (2) requests, (3) wants\*

110 who

111 young gentleman

112 with

113 money (that which "chinks": coins – there being no paper money)

114 dear account = costly/dire/grievous reckoning

115 (she is his "foe," but his life is owed to her)

*Benvolio* Away, be gone, the sport is at the best.<sup>116</sup>  
*Romeo* Ay, so I fear: the more is my unrest.<sup>117</sup> 120  
*Capulet* Nay, gentlemen, prepare not<sup>118</sup> to be gone.  
 We have a trifling foolish<sup>119</sup> banquet<sup>120</sup> towards.<sup>121</sup>  
*(they whisper in his ear)* Is it e'en so? Why then, I thank you all,  
 I thank you, honest<sup>122</sup> gentlemen. Good night.  
*(to Servingmen)* More torches here! *(Maskers leave)* Come on  
 then, let's to bed. 125  
 Ah, sirrah, by my fay,<sup>123</sup> it waxes<sup>124</sup> late.  
 I'll to my rest.

## EXEUNT ALL BUT JULIET AND NURSE

*Juliet* Come hither, Nurse. What is yond gentleman?<sup>125</sup>  
*Nurse* The son and heir of old Tiberio.  
*Juliet* What's he that now is going out of door? 130  
*Nurse* Marry, that, I think, be young Petruchio.  
*Juliet* What's he that follows there, that would not dance?  
*Nurse* I know not.  
*Juliet* Go ask his name. — *(to herself)* If he be married,  
 My grave is like<sup>126</sup> to be my wedding bed. 135  
*Nurse* His name is Romeo, and a Montague,

116 see act I, scene 4, note 52

117 turmoil

118 prepare not = don't ready yourselves

119 trifling foolish = insignificant/petty/humble

120 small repast/meal

121 on the way

122 honorable\*

123 faith (a common exclamation)

124 grows

125 yond gentleman = that distant gentleman (over there)

126 likely

The only son of your great enemy.

*Juliet* My only love, sprung from my only hate.

Too early seen unknown, and known too late.

140 Prodigious<sup>127</sup> birth of love it is to me

That I must love a loathèd enemy.

*Nurse* What's this? what's this?

*Juliet* A rhyme I learnt even now

Of one I danced withal.

A CALL WITHIN: JULIET

*Nurse* Anon, anon!

Come, let's away; the strangers all are gone.

EXEUNT

127 (1) ominous, unnatural, monstrous, (2) astonishing, amazing

# Act 2



## PROLOGUE

### ENTER CHORUS

*Chorus* Now old desire<sup>1</sup> doth in his<sup>2</sup> deathbed lie,  
And young affection gapes<sup>3</sup> to be his<sup>4</sup> heir.  
That fair<sup>5</sup> for which love groaned for and would die,<sup>6</sup>  
With tender Juliet matched<sup>7</sup> is now not fair.  
Now Romeo is beloved, and loves again,  
Alike<sup>8</sup> bewitchèd by the charm of looks,<sup>9</sup>  
But to his foe<sup>10</sup> supposed<sup>11</sup> he must complain<sup>12</sup>

5

1 old desire = Romeo's former love

2 its

3 is eager

4 its

5 Rosaline

6 would die = (1) wished to die, (2) wished for sexual orgasm

7 compared

8 both Romeo and Juliet

9 (once again, see act 1, scene 2, note 47)

10 (1) enemy, as a Capulet, (2) female beloved, in Renaissance love poetry

11 erroneously believed (referring to meaning 1, in note 10, just above)

12 lament, moan, mourn (in a literary sense)



And she steal<sup>13</sup> love's sweet bait<sup>14</sup> from fearful hooks.<sup>15</sup>  
 Being held<sup>16</sup> a foe, he may not have access  
 10 To breathe<sup>17</sup> such vows as lovers use to<sup>18</sup> swear,  
 And she as much in love, her means<sup>19</sup> much less  
 To meet her new belovèd anywhere.  
 But passion lends them power, time means, to meet,  
 Tempering<sup>20</sup> extremities with extreme sweet.

EXIT

13 take secretly

14 allurement, temptation

15 fearful hooks = dreadful/terrible snares, traps

16 believed to be

17 speak, passionately utter/whisper

18 use to = customarily

19 resources, possibilities for action\*

20 mingling, modifying

## SCENE I

*A lane outside the wall of Capulet's orchard*<sup>21</sup>

ENTER ROMEO

*Romeo* Can I go forward<sup>22</sup> when my heart is here?  
 Turn back, dull earth,<sup>23</sup> and find thy center<sup>24</sup> out.<sup>25</sup>

HE CLIMBS THE WALL AND LEAPS DOWN THE OTHER SIDE

ENTER BENVOLIO AND MERCUTIO

*Benvolio* Romeo! My cousin Romeo! Romeo!

*Mercutio* He's wise,  
 And, on my life, hath stol'n<sup>26</sup> him home to bed.

*Benvolio* He ran this way, and leapt this orchard wall. 5

Call, good Mercutio.

*Mercutio* Nay, I'll conjure<sup>27</sup> too.*(loudly)* Romeo! Humors! Madman! Passion! Lover!

Appear thou in the likeness of a sigh.

Speak but one rhyme, and I am satisfied.

Cry but "Ay me!" Pronounce but "love" and "dove." 10

Speak to my gossip<sup>28</sup> Venus one fair word,One nickname for her purblind<sup>29</sup> son and heir,

21 garden

22 go forward = move on

23 earth = Romeo's body (humans having been created from earth/dust)

24 she around whom his life revolves (Juliet)

25 find . . . out = search for

26 gone secretly

27 (1) invoke magically sacred names, (2) beseech

28 intimate/chatty friend

29 totally blind

- Young Abraham<sup>30</sup> Cupid, he that shot so trim<sup>31</sup>  
 When King Cophetua<sup>32</sup> loved the beggar maid.  
 15 (*pause*) He<sup>33</sup> heareth not, he stirreth not, he moveth not.  
 The ape is dead,<sup>34</sup> and I must conjure him.  
 (*loudly*) I conjure thee by Rosaline's bright eyes,  
 By her high forehead and her scarlet lip,  
 By her fine foot, straight leg, and quivering thigh,  
 20 And the demesnes<sup>35</sup> that there adjacent<sup>36</sup> lie,  
 That in thy likeness thou appear to us!  
*Benvolio* An if he hear thee, thou wilt anger him.  
*Mercutio* This cannot anger him.'Twould anger him  
 To raise a spirit<sup>37</sup> in his mistress' circle<sup>38</sup>  
 25 Of some strange nature, letting it there stand<sup>39</sup>  
 Till she had laid it<sup>40</sup> and conjured it down.<sup>41</sup>  
 That were some<sup>42</sup> spite. My invocation  
 Is fair and honest: in his mistress' name,

30 young Abraham = young old

31 fine, beautifully

32 ("King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid" = old ballad in which a king, hostile to love, is looking out the window at a beggar maid, when Cupid, "The blinded boy, that shoots so trim," hits the king with an arrow. Cophetua falls in love and eventually marries the beggar girl. See Percy, *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, 1:189–94. The king's name is pronounced coFETya)

33 Romeo

34 ape is dead = Romeo is playing dead, as performing apes were trained to do

35 bordering (usually used for land, territories: diMEENZ)

36 bordering, close by (meaning, here, "genitalia")

37 (1) supernatural being, demon (2) vital power, penis

38 (1) magic circle, used for conjuring, (2) genitalia

39 be erect (bawdy)

40 laid it = (1) set it to rest (2) had sexual intercourse with it

41 (1) back to hell, (2) no longer erect (bawdy)

42 considerable

- I conjure only but to raise up him.<sup>43</sup>
- Benvolio* Come, he hath hid himself among these trees 30  
 To be consorted<sup>44</sup> with the humorous<sup>45</sup> night.  
 Blind is his love and best befits<sup>46</sup> the dark.
- Mercutio* If love be blind, love cannot hit the mark.  
 Now will he sit under a medlar<sup>47</sup> tree  
 And wish his mistress were that kind of fruit 35  
 As maids call medlars when they laugh alone.<sup>48</sup>  
 O Romeo, that she were, O that she were  
 An open arse,<sup>49</sup> thou<sup>50</sup> a pop'rin pear!<sup>51</sup>  
 Romeo, good night. I'll to my truckle bed.<sup>52</sup>  
 This field bed is too cold for me to sleep. 40  
 Come, shall we go?
- Benvolio* Go then, for 'tis in vain  
 To seek him here that means not to be found.

## EXEUNT

43 (bawdy)

44 united, in harmony

45 moody, capricious

46 suited for

47 a kind of apple, edible only when ripe enough to burst; thought to resemble female genitalia

48 (with no men present)

49 (1) medlar fruit, (2) posterior, rump ("arse" = British form of "ass")

50 and you were

51 a kind of pear, shaped like a penis

52 truckle bed = bed on castors/wheels

SCENE 2  
*Capulet's orchard*

ENTER ROMEO

Romeo He<sup>1</sup> jests at scars that<sup>2</sup> never felt a wound.

ENTER JULIET ABOVE, AT A WINDOW

(*quietly*) But soft. What light through yonder window breaks?  
It is the East, and Juliet is the sun.

Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,

5 Who is already sick and pale with grief  
That thou her maid art far more fair than she.

Be not her maid,<sup>3</sup> since she is envious.

Her vestal livery<sup>4</sup> is but sick<sup>5</sup> and green,<sup>6</sup>

And none but fools<sup>7</sup> do wear it. Cast it off.

10 It is my lady!<sup>8</sup> O it is my love.

O that she knew she were.<sup>9</sup>

She speaks,<sup>10</sup> yet she says nothing. What of that?

Her eye discourses:<sup>11</sup> I will answer it.

I am too bold. 'Tis not to me she speaks.

15 Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,

1 Mercutio: Romeo hears him from the other side of the wall

2 who

3 be not her maid = (1) don't serve her, (2) don't remain a virgin

4 vestal livery = virginal clothing, servants' uniform\*

5 pale, wan

6 ("green sickness" = anemia common to pubescent young women)

7 court jesters, who wore green and yellow coats

8 adored woman (chivalric term)

9 was my lady

10 is affecting/expressive

11 speaks, talks

Having some business, do entreat her eyes  
 To twinkle in their spheres<sup>12</sup> till they return.  
 What if her eyes were there,<sup>13</sup> they<sup>14</sup> in her head?  
 The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars  
 As daylight doth a lamp. Her eyes in heaven 20  
 Would through the airy region stream so bright  
 That birds would sing and think it were<sup>15</sup> not night.  
 See how she leans her cheek upon her hand.  
 O that I were a glove upon that hand,  
 That I might touch that cheek.

*Juliet* Ay me.

*Romeo* She speaks. 25

O speak again,<sup>16</sup> bright angel, for thou art  
 As glorious to this night, being o'er my head,<sup>17</sup>  
 As is a wingèd messenger<sup>18</sup> of heaven  
 Unto the white upturnèd wond'ring eyes  
 Of mortals that fall back<sup>19</sup> to gaze on him, 30  
 When he bestrides<sup>20</sup> the lazy puffing<sup>21</sup> clouds  
 And sails upon the bosom<sup>22</sup> of the air.

*Juliet* O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore<sup>23</sup> art thou Romeo?

12 (in Ptolemaic astronomy, stars were contained in spheres)

13 in the sky

14 the stars

15 (subjunctive)

16 (Romeo is still talking, quietly, to himself only)

17 (Juliet is at her window, which is "above" stage level)

18 wingèd messenger = angel

19 fall back = retreat, step back

20 he bestrides = the angel mounts/rides on

21 sending out wisps/vapors (some texts have "pacing")

22 surface

23 wherefore art thou = why are you (named)

Deny<sup>24</sup> thy father and refuse thy name.

35 Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn<sup>25</sup> my love  
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.<sup>26</sup>

*Romeo (aside)* Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

*Juliet* 'Tis but thy name that is my enemy:

Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.

40 What's Montague? It is nor<sup>27</sup> hand nor foot,  
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part  
Belonging to a man. O be some other name.<sup>28</sup>

What's in a name? That which we call a rose  
By any other name<sup>29</sup> would smell as sweet.

45 So Romeo would, were he not Romeo called,  
Retain that dear<sup>30</sup> perfection which he owes<sup>31</sup>  
Without that title.<sup>32</sup> Romeo, doff<sup>33</sup> thy name,  
And for<sup>34</sup> that name, which is no part of thee,  
Take all myself.

*Romeo (speaking to her)* I take thee at thy word.

50 Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized,  
Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

24 renounce, disavow, repudiate

25 (once Romeo swears that he is her love, and intends to marry her, she will consider herself married)

26 (since a married woman takes her husband's name)

27 neither

28 beLONGing to a MAN o BE some OTHer NAME ("to a" are partly elided words, just barely syllables)

29 (some texts have "word")

30 noble, glorious\*

31 possesses, owns

32 name

33 lay aside, get rid of

34 in place/instead of

*Juliet* What man<sup>35</sup> art thou that, thus bescreened<sup>36</sup> in night,  
So stumblest on<sup>37</sup> my counsel?<sup>38</sup>

*Romeo* By a name

I know not how to tell thee who I am.

My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself,

55

Because it is an enemy to thee.

Had I it written, I would tear<sup>39</sup> the word.

*Juliet* My ears have yet not drunk a hundred words  
Of that tongue's utterance,<sup>40</sup> yet I know the sound.

Art thou not Romeo, and a Montague?

60

*Romeo* Neither, fair saint, if either thee dislike.<sup>41</sup>

*Juliet* How cam'st thou hither, tell me, and wherefore?

The orchard walls are high and hard to climb,

And the place death, considering who thou art,

If any of my kinsmen find thee here.

65

*Romeo* With love's light wings did I o'erperch<sup>42</sup> these walls,

For stony limits<sup>43</sup> cannot hold love out,

And what love can do, that dares love attempt.

Therefore thy kinsmen are no let<sup>44</sup> to me.

*Juliet* If they do see thee, they will murder thee.

70

*Romeo* Alack, there lies more peril in thine eye

Than twenty of their swords. Look thou but sweet,

35 what man = who

36 hidden from sight, covered in darkness

37 stumblest on = comes upon accidentally/by chance

38 private musing

39 take away/remove by force/violence

40 UTrance

41 offend, displease

42 fly over

43 boundaries

44 barrier, stop (some texts have "stop")



And I am proof<sup>45</sup> against their enmity.

*Juliet* I would not for the world they saw thee here.

75 *Romeo* I have night's cloak to hide me from their sight,

And but<sup>46</sup> thou love me, let them find me here.

My life were better ended by their hate

Than death proruèd,<sup>47</sup> wanting of<sup>48</sup> thy love.

*Juliet* By whose direction<sup>49</sup> found'st thou out this place?

80 *Romeo* By love, that first did prompt<sup>50</sup> me to inquire.

He<sup>51</sup> lent me counsel,<sup>52</sup> and I lent him eyes.

I am no pilot,<sup>53</sup> yet wert thou as far<sup>54</sup>

As that vast shore washed with<sup>55</sup> the farthest sea,

I would adventure<sup>56</sup> for such merchandise.

85 *Juliet* Thou knowest the mask of night is on my face,

Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek

For that which thou hast heard me speak tonight.

Fain<sup>57</sup> would I dwell on form<sup>58</sup> – fain, fain deny

What I have spoke. But farewell compliment.<sup>59</sup>

90 Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say “Ay,”

45 impenetrable, invulnerable

46 if only

47 deferred, postponed

48 wanting of = lacking, without

49 guidance, giving of directions

50 incite, urge, inspire

51 Love/Cupid

52 advice

53 steersman, helmsman, versed in local navigation

54 far away

55 (1) washed with = bathed/wet by/beat upon by, (2) adjoining, touching

56 take the chance/the risk, venture\*

57 gladly\*

58 dwell on form = linger/insist on formality/decorum/etiquette

59 ceremony, politeness

And I will take thy word. Yet, if thou swear'st,  
 Thou mayst prove false. At lovers' perjuries,  
 They say Jove<sup>60</sup> laughs. O gentle Romeo,  
 If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully.<sup>61</sup>  
 Or if thou thinkest I am too quickly won, 95  
 I'll frown, and be perverse,<sup>62</sup> and say thee nay,  
 So<sup>63</sup> thou wilt woo.<sup>64</sup> But else,<sup>65</sup> not for the world.  
 In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond,<sup>66</sup>  
 And therefore thou mayst think my havior<sup>67</sup> light,<sup>68</sup>  
 But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true<sup>69</sup> 100  
 Than those that have more cunning<sup>70</sup> to be strange.<sup>71</sup>  
 I should have been more strange, I must confess,  
 But that thou overheard'st, ere I was ware,<sup>72</sup>  
 My true love<sup>73</sup> passion. Therefore pardon me,  
 And not impute this yielding to light love, 105  
 Which<sup>74</sup> the dark night hath so discoverèd.<sup>75</sup>

*Romeo* Lady, by yonder blessèd moon I swear,

60 king of the gods

61 in truth, sincerely

62 stubborn, difficult

63 in order that

64 court me

65 otherwise

66 foolishly tender, over-affectionate, doting\*

67 behavior, conduct, deportment

68 wanton, frivolous, not to be respected

69 faithful, reliable, steadfast\*

70 capacity, skill

71 distant, reserved, cold

72 aware, conscious

73 (adjective)

74 this love which

75 uncovered, disclosed, revealed

That tips<sup>76</sup> with silver all these fruit tree tops –

*Juliet* O swear not by the moon, th' inconstant<sup>77</sup> moon,  
 110 That monthly changes in her circled orb,<sup>78</sup>  
 Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.

*Romeo* What shall I swear by?

*Juliet* Do not swear at all,  
 Or if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious<sup>79</sup> self,  
 Which is the god of my idolatry,<sup>80</sup>  
 And I'll believe thee.

115 *Romeo* If my heart's dear love –

*Juliet* Well, do not swear. Although I joy<sup>81</sup> in thee,  
 I have no joy of this contract<sup>82</sup> tonight.  
 It is too rash,<sup>83</sup> too unadvised,<sup>84</sup> too sudden,  
 Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be  
 120 Ere one can say "It lightens."<sup>85</sup> Sweet, good night.  
 This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,  
 May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet.  
 Good night, good night. As<sup>86</sup> sweet repose and rest  
 Come to thy heart as that within my breast.

125 *Romeo* O wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

76 adorns

77 frequently changing/altering

78 circled orb = circular orbit

79 charming, attractive

80 idol worship

81 rejoice, delight, exult

82 mutual agreement (conTRACT)

83 hasty, impetuous, rapid

84 spoken without proper thought/reflection

85 flashes

86 the same, equal

*Juliet* What satisfaction<sup>87</sup> canst thou have tonight?

*Romeo* Th' exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine.

*Juliet* I gave thee mine before thou didst request it,  
And yet I would<sup>88</sup> it were<sup>89</sup> to give again.

*Romeo* Would'st thou withdraw it? For what purpose, love? 130

*Juliet* But to be frank<sup>90</sup> and give it thee again.

And yet I wish but for the thing I have.

My bounty<sup>91</sup> is as boundless as the sea,

My love as deep. The more I give to thee,

The more I have, for both<sup>92</sup> are infinite. 135

I hear some noise within. Dear love, adieu!

NURSE CALLS WITHIN

Anon, good Nurse! – Sweet Montague, be true.

Stay but a little, I will come again.

EXIT JULIET

*Romeo* O blessèd, blessèd night! I am afeard,

Being in night, all this is but a dream, 140

Too flattering<sup>93</sup> sweet to be substantial.<sup>94</sup>

ENTER JULIET ABOVE

87 gratification of desire (Juliet consistently shows a keen awareness of sexual realities)

88 wish

89 still remained

90 generous, lavish

91 generosity, liberality

92 what I have and what I give

93 pleasingly, pleasurable

94 real (subSTANTiAL)

*Juliet* Three words, dear Romeo, and good night indeed.<sup>95</sup>

If that thy bent<sup>96</sup> of love be honorable,

Thy purpose marriage, send me word tomorrow,

145 *By one that I'll procure<sup>97</sup> to come to thee,*

Where and what time thou wilt perform the rite,

And all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay

And follow thee my lord<sup>98</sup> throughout the world.

*Nurse* (*within*) Madam!

150 *Juliet* I come, anon. – But if thou meanest not well,

I do beseech thee –

*Nurse* (*within*) Madam!

*Juliet* By and by<sup>99</sup> I come –

To cease thy suit and leave me to my grief.

Tomorrow will I send.

*Romeo* So thrive<sup>100</sup> my soul –

*Juliet* A thousand times good night.

EXIT JULIET

155 *Romeo* A thousand times the worse, to want<sup>101</sup> thy light.

Love goes toward love as schoolboys from<sup>102</sup> their books,

But love from<sup>103</sup> love, towards school<sup>104</sup> with heavy looks.

ENTER JULIET ABOVE

95 really, positively

96 disposition, inclination

97 contrive, cause, get

98 husband (with the clear sense of “head of the household”)

99 by and by = immediately, at once

100 flourish, prosper

101 lack\*

102 go away from

103 away from

104 as schoolboys go

- Juliet* Hist! Romeo, hist! O for a falconer's<sup>105</sup> voice  
 To lure this tassel-gentle<sup>106</sup> back again.  
 Bondage<sup>107</sup> is hoarse<sup>108</sup> and may not speak aloud, 160  
 Else would I tear the cave where Echo lies<sup>109</sup>  
 And make her airy tongue more hoarse than mine  
 With repetition of my Romeo's name.  
 Romeo!
- Romeo* (*to himself*) It is my soul that calls upon my name. 165  
 How silver sweet sound<sup>110</sup> lovers' tongues by night,  
 Like softest music to attending ears.
- Juliet* Romeo!
- Romeo* My niese.<sup>111</sup>
- Juliet* What o'clock tomorrow  
 Shall I send to thee?
- Romeo* By the hour of nine.
- Juliet* I will not fail. 'Tis twenty years till then. 170  
 I have forgot why I did call thee back.
- Romeo* Let me stand here till thou remember it.
- Juliet* I shall forget, to have<sup>112</sup> thee still stand there,  
 Rememb'ring how I love thy company.
- Romeo* And I'll still stay, to have thee still forget, 175  
 Forgetting any other home but this.
- Juliet* 'Tis almost morning. I would have thee gone,

105 keeper/trainer/hunter with falcons/hawks (who must call so high-flying birds can hear)

106 male falcon, nobler than a mere goshawk

107 restriction (as a young unmarried woman)

108 pitched low, not clear/smooth

109 (See Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, book 3)

110 (verb)

111 falcon/hawk too young to have flown (some texts have "nyas")

112 to have = in order to have

And yet no farther than a wanton's bird,<sup>113</sup>  
 That lets it hop a little from his hand,  
 180 Like a poor prisoner in his twisted gyves,<sup>114</sup>  
 And with a silk thread plucks it back again,  
 So loving<sup>115</sup> jealous of his<sup>116</sup> liberty.

*Romeo* I would I were thy bird.

*Juliet* Sweet, so would I.

Yet I should kill thee with much cherishing.<sup>117</sup>  
 185 Good night, good night. Parting is such sweet sorrow  
 That I shall say good night till it be morrow.

EXIT

*Romeo* Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast.  
 Would I were sleep and peace, so sweet<sup>118</sup> to rest.  
 Hence will I to my ghostly father's<sup>119</sup> close cell,<sup>120</sup>  
 190 His help to crave<sup>121</sup> and my dear hap<sup>122</sup> to tell.

EXIT

113 wanton's bird = the pet of a playful/spoiled child

114 fetters, shackles, irons

115 (adjective)

116 its

117 pampering, caressing

118 (adverb)

119 spiritual guide/confessor

120 close cell = secluded room, small living quarters

121 request, ask/beg for

122 fortune, luck

## SCENE 3

*Friar Laurence's cell*

ENTER FRIAR, ALONE, WITH A BASKET

*Friar* <sup>1</sup>The gray-eyed morn smiles on the frowning night,  
 Check'ring<sup>2</sup> the eastern clouds with streaks of light,  
 And fleckèd<sup>3</sup> darkness like a drunkard reels  
 From forth<sup>4</sup> day's path and Titan's fiery wheels.<sup>5</sup>  
 Now, ere the sun advance<sup>6</sup> his burning eye 5  
 The day to cheer and night's dank<sup>7</sup> dew to dry,  
 I must up fill this osier cage<sup>8</sup> of ours  
 With baleful weeds<sup>9</sup> and precious juicèd flowers.<sup>10</sup>  
 The earth that's nature's mother is her<sup>11</sup> tomb.  
 What is her<sup>12</sup> burying grave,<sup>13</sup> that is her<sup>14</sup> womb, 10  
 And from her womb children of divers kind  
 We<sup>15</sup> sucking on her natural<sup>16</sup> bosom find,  
 Many for many virtues<sup>17</sup> excellent,

1 (some texts conclude act 2, scene 2, with the first four lines)

2 marking like a checker- or chessboard

3 dappled, spotted

4 from forth = away from, out of

5 Titan's fiery wheels = the burning wheels of the sun god's chariot

6 move forward, raise, uplift

7 injuriously damp

8 container of woven willow twigs

9 baleful weeds = deadly/destructive/malignant herbs

10 precious juicèd flowers = flowers containing valuable juices

11 nature's

12 nature's

13 place

14 the earth's

15 (the verb of which "we" is the subject is "find")

16 normal, ordinary

17 qualities, properties



None but for some, and yet all different.  
 15 O mickle<sup>18</sup> is the powerful grace<sup>19</sup> that lies  
 In plants, herbs, stones, and their true qualities,<sup>20</sup>  
 For naught so vile<sup>21</sup> that on the earth doth live  
 But to the earth some special good doth give,  
 Nor aught so good but, strained<sup>22</sup> from that fair use,  
 20 Revolts<sup>23</sup> from true birth,<sup>24</sup> stumbling on<sup>25</sup> abuse.  
 Virtue itself turns<sup>26</sup> vice, being misapplied,  
 And vice sometime<sup>27</sup> by action dignified.<sup>28</sup>  
 Within the infant rind<sup>29</sup> of this small flower  
 Poison hath residence,<sup>30</sup> and medicine power,<sup>31</sup>  
 25 For this, being smelt, with that part<sup>32</sup> cheers each part,<sup>33</sup>  
 Being<sup>34</sup> tasted, stays<sup>35</sup> all senses with<sup>36</sup> the heart.  
 Two such opposè<sup>37</sup> kings encamp them<sup>38</sup> still

18 much, great

19 wholesome virtue/efficacy

20 capacities, natures

21 wretched, repulsive

22 distorted, pressed, corrupted

23 departs

24 true birth = its correct/real/right/legitimate origin/lineage

25 stumbling on = falling into

26 turns into

27 is sometimes

28 action dignified = what it does is raised/exalted

29 infant rind = new/early stage of the peel/skin/membrane

30 hath residence = is contained

31 medicine power = medical remedies have strength/active capacity

32 quality ("scent")

33 cheers = that quality (its odor) comforts/cures/enlivens everything (all portions)

34 but being

35 stops

36 following on/along with its stopping

37 adverse, hostile

38 encamp them = settle/lodge themselves

In man as well as herbs – grace and rude will<sup>39</sup> –  
 And where the worser is predominant<sup>40</sup>  
 Full<sup>41</sup> soon the canker<sup>42</sup> death eats up that plant.

30

ENTER ROMEO

*Romeo* Good morrow, father.

*Friar*

Benedicite!<sup>43</sup>

What early<sup>44</sup> tongue so sweet<sup>45</sup> saluteth<sup>46</sup> me?  
 (*recognizing Romeo*) Young son, it argues<sup>47</sup> a distempered<sup>48</sup>  
 head

So soon to bid good morrow<sup>49</sup> to thy bed.

Care<sup>50</sup> keeps his watch<sup>51</sup> in every old man's eye,

35

And where care lodges sleep will never lie,

But where unbruised<sup>52</sup> youth with unstuffed<sup>53</sup> brain

Doth couch<sup>54</sup> his limbs, there golden sleep doth reign.

Therefore thy earliness doth me assure

39 God's grace and rough/raw human longing/passion (GRACE and rude WILL)

40 (the WORser IS preDOMinANT)

41 very

42 ulcerish decay

43 bless you! (BENeDiciTAY)

44 early in the morning

45 (adverb)

46 greets

47 indicates, proves

48 disturbed, troubled

49 morning (greeting it as one leaves it for the new day)

50 sorrow

51 vigilance, wakefulness

52 undamaged (as yet) by life

53 not yet swarming full

54 lie down

- 40 Thou art uproused with<sup>55</sup> some distemperature.<sup>56</sup>  
 Or if not so,<sup>57</sup> then here I hit it right –  
 Our Romeo hath not been in bed tonight.
- Romeo* That last is true – the sweeter rest was mine.
- Friar* God pardon sin! Wast thou with Rosaline?
- 45 *Romeo* With Rosaline, my ghostly father? No.  
 I have forgot that name, and that name's woe.<sup>58</sup>
- Friar* That's my good son! But where hast thou been then?<sup>59</sup>
- Romeo* I'll tell thee ere thou ask it me again.  
 I have been feasting<sup>60</sup> with mine enemy,  
 50 Where on a sudden one<sup>61</sup> hath wounded me  
 That's by me wounded. Both our remedies<sup>62</sup>  
 Within thy help and holy physic<sup>63</sup> lies.  
 I bear no hatred, blessèd man, for – lo! –  
 My intercession<sup>64</sup> likewise steads<sup>65</sup> my foe.
- 55 *Friar* Be plain, good son, and homely in thy drift.<sup>66</sup>  
 Riddling<sup>67</sup> confession finds<sup>68</sup> but riddling shrift.
- Romeo* Then plainly know my heart's dear love is set

55 uproused with = awakened by

56 disorder of mind or body (thou ART upROUSED with SOME disTEMperTURE)

57 (Romeo perhaps indicates that this is not the case)

58 grief, lamentation

59 (but WHERE hast THOU been THEN)

60 enjoying myself, celebrating, partying

61 someone

62 cures

63 healing knowledge/art

64 my intercession = what I am asking you for

65 profits, helps

66 homely in thy drift = simple/everydaylike in your meaning\*

67 puzzling, enigmatic, ambiguous

68 meets with

On the fair daughter of rich Capulet.  
 As mine on hers, so hers is set on mine,  
 And all combined,<sup>69</sup> save what thou must combine 60  
 By holy marriage. When, and where, and how  
 We met, we wooed and made exchange of vow,  
 I'll tell thee as we pass.<sup>70</sup> But this I pray,  
 That thou consent to marry us today.  
*Friar* Holy Saint Francis! What a change is here. 65  
 Is Rosaline, that thou didst love so dear,  
 So soon forsaken? Young men's love then lies  
 Not truly in their hearts, but in their eyes.  
 Jesu Maria! What a deal of brine<sup>71</sup>  
 Hath washed thy sallow<sup>72</sup> cheeks for Rosaline. 70  
 How much salt water thrown away in waste  
 To season<sup>73</sup> love, that of it doth not taste.  
 The sun not yet thy sighs from heaven clears,<sup>74</sup>  
 Thy old groans ring yet in mine ancient ears.  
 Lo, here upon thy cheek the stain doth sit 75  
 Of an old tear that is not washed off yet.  
 If e'er thou wast thyself, and these woes thine,  
 Thou and these woes were all for Rosaline.  
 And art thou changed? Pronounce this sentence<sup>75</sup> then:  
 Women may fall when there's no strength in men. 80

69 unified, agreed upon

70 proceed, walk along

71 salt water (tears)

72 sickly yellowish

73 flavor, make savory

74 removes

75 judgment, wise maxim/saying

*Romeo* Thou chid'st<sup>76</sup> me oft for loving Rosaline.

*Friar* For doting,<sup>77</sup> not for loving, pupil mine.

*Romeo* And bad'st me bury love.

*Friar* Not in a grave

To lay one in, another out to have.

85 *Romeo* I pray thee chide not. She whom I love now

Doth grace<sup>78</sup> for grace and love for love allow.<sup>79</sup>

The other did not so.

*Friar* O she knew well

Thy love did read by rote,<sup>80</sup> that could not spell.

But come, young waverer,<sup>81</sup> come go with me.

90 In one respect I'll thy assistant be,

For this alliance may so happy<sup>82</sup> prove

To turn your households' rancor to pure love.

*Romeo* O let us hence! I stand on<sup>83</sup> sudden haste.

*Friar* Wisely, and slow.<sup>84</sup> They stumble that run fast.

EXEUNT

76 scolded\*

77 displaying excessive/foolish/infatuated emotion

78 favor

79 approve of, accept

80 memory

81 shifter back and forth, vacillator

82 lucky, fortunate

83 stand on = insist on

84 wisely, and slow = it is better to proceed wisely and slowly

## SCENE 4

*A street*

ENTER BENVOLIO AND MERCUTIO

*Mercutio* Where the devil should this Romeo be? Came he not home tonight?<sup>1</sup>

*Benvolio* Not to his father's. I spoke with his man.

*Mercutio* Why, that same pale hard-hearted wench, that Rosaline, torments him so that he will sure run mad. 5

*Benvolio* Tybalt, the kinsman to old Capulet, hath sent a letter to his father's house.

*Mercutio* A challenge, on my life.

*Benvolio* Romeo will answer it.

*Mercutio* Any man that can write may answer a letter. 10

*Benvolio* Nay, he will answer the letter's master, how<sup>2</sup> he dares, being dared.

*Mercutio* Alas, poor Romeo, he is already dead! stabbed with a white wench's black eye, shot through the ear with a love song, the very pin<sup>3</sup> of his heart cleft<sup>4</sup> with<sup>5</sup> the blind bow boy's butt shaft<sup>6</sup> – and is he a man to encounter Tybalt? 15

*Benvolio* Why, what is Tybalt?

*Mercutio* More than Prince of Cats.<sup>7</sup> O he's the courageous

1 last night

2 how he dares, being dared = saying in what manner/means he undertakes, having been challenged

3 peg/nail at the center of a target

4 split

5 by

6 thick arrow used in target shooting

7 (Tibert, in the Old French *Renard the Fox* [trans. Patricia Terry], is “prince” of cats as Renard is “prince” of foxes; both the medieval tale and *Romeo and Juliet* are brilliantly echoed in S.V. Benet's story “The King of the Cats”)

captain<sup>8</sup> of compliments.<sup>9</sup> He fights as you sing pricksong<sup>10</sup>  
 20 – keeps time, distance, and proportion:<sup>11</sup> rests me his minim  
 rests,<sup>12</sup> one, two, and the third in your bosom!<sup>13</sup> The very  
 butcher of a silk button,<sup>14</sup> a duelist, a duelist, a gentleman of  
 the very first house,<sup>15</sup> of the first and second cause.<sup>16</sup> Ah, the  
 immortal passado,<sup>17</sup> the punto reverso,<sup>18</sup> the hay!<sup>19</sup>

25 *Benvolio* The what?

*Mercutio* The pox of<sup>20</sup> such antic, lipping, affecting  
 fantasticoes<sup>21</sup> – these new tuners of accent!<sup>22</sup> “By Jesu, a very  
 good blade! a very tall<sup>23</sup> man! a very good whore!” Why, is

8 chief, prince (in modern military usage, a “general”)

9 dueling courtesies, Italian style

10 written music, as opposed to that sung from memory or by ear (pricks = musical notes set to paper; prick (verb) = to stab, run through)

11 (1) metrical/musical rhythm/harmony, (2) melodic line

12 his minim rests = takes/makes the shortest possible rests/pauses (minim in Renaissance musical notation is what is today called a half note)

13 one, two, and the third in your bosom! = (1) then it's one, two, three – and all over!, or (2) he makes one feint, pauses, then another feint, pauses again, and then runs you through!

14 butcher of a silk button = so accurate that he can slice off a button

15 one whose life is governed by the first of the twelve astrological houses, the first being the ascendant or most important of all

16 first and second cause = primary reasons for fighting a duel: first, accusation of serious crime, second, honor

17 immortal passado = heavenly/famous thrust, sword and one foot moving forward at the same time\*

18 backhand thrust

19 hay! = Italian *hai* (*avere*, “to have”), “you’ve got it!” – exclaimed when a thrust hits home

20 the pox of = the plague on (in modern English, “damn such . . .”)

21 antic, . . . affecting fantasticoes (some texts have “phantasimes”) = grotesque/bizarre/uncouth/ludicrous . . . full of affectation absurd/irrational people

22 tuners of accent! = adjusters of how we speak!

23 active, proper, brave

not this a lamentable thing, grandsir,<sup>24</sup> that we should be thus  
 afflicted with these strange flies,<sup>25</sup> these fashion mongers,<sup>26</sup> 30  
 these pardon me's,<sup>27</sup> who stand so much on the new form<sup>28</sup>  
 that they cannot sit at ease on the old bench?<sup>29</sup> O their  
 bones, their bones!<sup>30</sup>

## ENTER ROMEO

*Benolio* Here comes Romeo, here comes Romeo!

*Mercutio* Without his roe,<sup>31</sup> like a dried herring. O flesh, flesh, 35  
 how art thou fishified!<sup>32</sup> Now is he for<sup>33</sup> the numbers<sup>34</sup> that  
 Petrarch flowed in.<sup>35</sup> Laura,<sup>36</sup> to<sup>37</sup> his lady,<sup>38</sup> was but a  
 kitchen wench – marry, she had a better love<sup>39</sup> to berhyme  
 her – <sup>40</sup> Dido a dowdy, Cleopatra a gypsy,<sup>41</sup> Helen and

24 grandfather

25 insignificant insects/flatterers

26 dealers, traffickers

27 people who constantly excuse themselves, in the Continental (very un-English) manner

28 style, model (“form” also = bench)

29 old bench = old style plain/hard wooden seat

30 their bones! = their delicate rear ends aching because of hard wood (there may also be a reference to a link between fashionable men and the “bone ache,” as venereal disease was known)

31 without his roe = (1) deprived of his sperm, like a male fish (2) take the letters “r,” “o,” and “e” out of “Romeo” and you get, more or less, “meo” or “o me,” which are typical lovers’ cries

32 dried out, after a night of sexual activity

33 ready for

34 poetry, then exclusively metrical (which means “measurement”)

35 flowed in = glided along in (see act 1, scene 1, note 47)

36 Petrarch’s beloved

37 compared to

38 Romeo’s lady, thought by Mercutio to be Rosaline

39 lover

40 Dido, Cleopatra, Helen, Hero, and Thisbe (THIZbee) are all compared to Rosaline; gypsies were believed to have come from Egypt

41 cheating hussies, dark skinned to boot



40 Hero<sup>42</sup> hildings and harlots,<sup>43</sup> Thisbe<sup>44</sup> a gray eye or so,<sup>45</sup> but  
not to the purpose.<sup>46</sup> (*to Romeo*) Signior Romeo, bon jour.  
There's a French salutation to your French slop.<sup>47</sup> You gave  
us the counterfeit fairly<sup>48</sup> last night.

*Romeo* Good morrow to you both. What counterfeit did I give  
45 you?

*Mercutio* The slip,<sup>49</sup> sir, the slip. Can you not conceive?<sup>50</sup>

*Romeo* Pardon, good Mercutio. My business was great, and in  
such a case as mine a man may strain<sup>51</sup> courtesy.

*Mercutio* That's as much as to say, such a case as yours constrains a  
50 man to bow in the hams.<sup>52</sup>

*Romeo* Meaning, to curtsy.

*Mercutio* Thou hast most kindly<sup>53</sup> hit it.

*Romeo* A most courteous<sup>54</sup> exposition.

*Mercutio* Nay, I am the very pink<sup>55</sup> of courtesy.

55 *Romeo* Pink for flower.

*Mercutio* Right.

42 beloved of Leander (see Christopher Marlowe's "Hero and Leander")

43 hildings and harlots = jades/baggages and whores

44 beloved of Pyramus; they both die

45 a gray eye or so = all of them just females with gray eyes

46 to the purpose = relevant

47 clothing

48 gave us the counterfeit fairly = really/fully deceived us

49 (1) evasion/escape, (2) a counterfeit coin

50 think/imagine it

51 contract, diminish, restrain

52 limits/afflicts a man in bowing the backs of his thighs/knees (your "great business" was sexual, and your thighs/knees are weary from it)

53 (1) naturally, characteristically, (2) sympathetically, pleasantly

54 (curtsy-ess)

55 (1) decorative hole punched in clothing/shoes, (2) rapier thrust, (3) flower,  
(4) finest example

*Romeo* Why, then is my pump<sup>56</sup> well flowered.

*Mercutio* Sure<sup>57</sup> wit, follow me<sup>58</sup> this jest now till thou hast worn out thy pump, that,<sup>59</sup> when the single<sup>60</sup> sole of it is worn,<sup>61</sup> the jest may remain, after the wearing,<sup>62</sup> solely singular.<sup>63</sup> 60

*Romeo* O single soled<sup>64</sup> jest, solely singular<sup>65</sup> for the singleness.<sup>66</sup>

*Mercutio* Come between us,<sup>67</sup> good Benvolio! My wits faint.<sup>68</sup>

*Romeo* Swits<sup>69</sup> and spurs,<sup>70</sup> swits and spurs, or I'll cry a match.<sup>71</sup> 65

*Mercutio* Nay, if our wits run the wild goose chase,<sup>72</sup> I am done,<sup>73</sup> for thou hast more of the wild goose in one of thy wits<sup>74</sup> than, I am sure, I have in my whole five. Was I with<sup>75</sup>

56 shoe

57 steadfast

58 me in

59 so that

60 poor, contemptible, thin

61 worn out

62 (1) being used, worn, (2) exhausting, wearing away

63 solely singular = (1) all alone, (2) a singular/unique sole

64 single soled = poor soled/souled

65 solely singular = only unique/superior

66 simplicity, naïveté

67 come between us = help me by stopping these punning exchanges, as would a second in a duel

68 wits faint = brain gives way/swoons

69 switches, whips

70 use whips and spurs on your faltering mind/steed

71 cry a match = announce/claim that the match is over ("I win!")

72 wild goose chase = a follow the leader race that could lead anywhere, and was therefore risky

73 finished, used up, worn out

74 faculties, senses (tasting, smelling, hearing, seeing, feeling)

75 alongside, together with/equal to

you there for the goose?<sup>76</sup>

70 *Romeo* Thou wast never with me for anything when thou wast  
not there for the goose.<sup>77</sup>

*Mercutio* I will bite thee by the ear<sup>78</sup> for that jest.

*Romeo* Nay, good goose,<sup>79</sup> bite not!<sup>80</sup>

*Mercutio* Thy wit is a very bitter sweetening,<sup>81</sup> it is a most sharp<sup>82</sup>  
75 sauce.<sup>83</sup>

*Romeo* And is it not, then, well served in to<sup>84</sup> a sweet goose?

*Mercutio* O here's a wit of cheveril,<sup>85</sup> that stretches from an inch  
narrow to an ell<sup>86</sup> narrow to an ell broad.

*Romeo* I stretch it<sup>87</sup> out for that word "broad," which, added to  
80 the goose, proves thee far and wide a broad goose.<sup>88</sup>

*Mercutio* (*happily*) Why, is not this<sup>89</sup> better now than groaning for  
love? Now art thou sociable, now art thou Romeo, now art  
thou what thou art, by art<sup>90</sup> as well as by nature. For this  
driveling love is like a great natural<sup>91</sup> that runs lolling<sup>92</sup> up

76 (1) the popular board game, "fox and geese," (2) the eating of the prize  
goose, after a contest

77 (1) eating the flesh, (2) enjoying the prostitute

78 bite thee by the ear = nibble affectionately on your ear

79 simpleton

80 nay, good goose, bite not = a mock cry: "Oh spare me, terrible creature!"

81 (1) sweetness, sweet flavoring, (2) type of apple often eaten with goose

82 (1) keen, (2) cutting, (3) pungent, caustic

83 (1) sauce, (2) sauciness, impertinence

84 well served in to = properly served with (since sweet dishes go best with  
pungent sauces)

85 of cheveril = made of kid leather, pliant and easily stretched

86 inches

87 my wit

88 broad goose = plain/obvious/outstanding/vulgar/indecent simpleton

89 this contest of wits

90 skill, learning\*

91 half-wit, born fool/idiot

92 lazily

- and down to hide his bauble<sup>93</sup> in a hole.<sup>94</sup> 85
- Benvolio* Stop there, stop there!
- Mercutio* Thou desirest me to stop<sup>95</sup> in my tale<sup>96</sup> against the hair.<sup>97</sup>
- Benvolio* Thou wouldst else have made thy tale large.<sup>98</sup>
- Mercutio* O thou art deceived! I would have made it short,<sup>99</sup> for 90  
I was come to the whole depth<sup>100</sup> of my tale, and meant indeed to occupy the argument<sup>101</sup> no longer.
- Romeo* Here's goodly gear!<sup>102</sup>

ENTER NURSE AND HER MAN PETER, AT THE OPPOSITE  
END OF THE STAGE

- Mercutio* A sail, a sail!<sup>103</sup>
- Benvolio* Two, two. A shirt and a smock.<sup>104</sup> 95
- Nurse* Peter.
- Peter* Anon.
- Nurse* My fan, Peter.
- Mercutio* <sup>105</sup>Good Peter, to hide her face, for her fan's the fairer

93 toy, worthless/paltry object/thing

94 (1) by burying it, (2) by inserting his thing/penis in a woman's vagina

95 (1) cease, (2) plug, stuff (verb)

96 (1) tale, (2) tail/penis

97 against the hair = (1) contrary to my inclination/its natural direction, (2) up against female genital hair

98 tale large = (1) story long, (2) tail/penis large, (3) licentious, improper, gross

99 (1) a short tale, (2) a small tail/penis

100 (1) tale's profundity, sagacity, (2) tail/penis's depth

101 occupy the argument = take possession of the subject/woman

102 here's goodly gear = *either* (1) this kind of talk is first-class stuff, *or* (2) (of the Nurse and Peter) here come good toys/stuff/doings

103 the Nurse, a large woman, appears on the horizon like an approaching ship

104 a shirt and a smock = a man and a woman

105 (it is not clear whether this is an aside, to his friends, or is spoken aloud for Peter and the Nurse to hear)

100 face<sup>106</sup> of the two.

*Nurse* God ye good morrow, gentlemen.

*Mercutio* God ye good den, fair gentlewoman.

*Nurse* Is it good den?<sup>107</sup>

*Mercutio* 'Tis no less, I tell ye, for the bawdy<sup>108</sup> hand of the dial is  
105 now upon the prick<sup>109</sup> of noon.

*Nurse* Out upon you.<sup>110</sup> What<sup>111</sup> a man are you?

*Romeo* One, gentlewoman, that God hath made, Himself to  
mar.<sup>112</sup>

*Nurse* By my troth,<sup>113</sup> it is well said. "For himself to mar,"  
110 quoth<sup>114</sup> 'a? Gentlemen, can any of you tell me where I may  
find the young Romeo?

*Romeo* I can tell you, but young Romeo will be older when  
you have found him than he was when you sought him. I am  
the youngest of that name, for fault<sup>115</sup> of a worse.

115 *Nurse* You say well.

*Mercutio* Yea, is the worst well? Very well took,<sup>116</sup> i' faith.  
Wisely, wisely.

*Nurse* If you be he, sir, I desire some confidence<sup>117</sup> with you.

*Benvolio* She will endite<sup>118</sup> him to some supper.

106 (fans often bore painted faces)

107 is it good den? = is it evening?

108 (1) soiled, dirty, (2) lewd, obscene

109 (1) mark on a dial, (2) penis

110 out upon you = (modern usage) come on!

111 what kind of

112 God hath made, Himself to mar = God created man in his image, and man  
spoils that image

113 by my troth = by my faith

114 says

115 lack

116 understood, grasped

117 (1) confidential communication? (2) uneducated mistake for "conference"?

118 deliberate mistake for "invite": Benvolio thinks/wants to think  
"confidence" (see note 117) is an error

*Mercutio* A bawd, a bawd, a bawd!<sup>119</sup> So ho!<sup>120</sup> 120

*Romeo* (to *Mercutio*) What hast thou found?

*Mercutio* No hare, sir, unless a hare, sir, in a lenten pie,<sup>121</sup> that is something stale and hoar<sup>122</sup> ere it be spent.<sup>123</sup>

## HE WALKS BY THEM AND SINGS

An old hare hoar,<sup>124</sup>  
 And an old hare hoar, 125  
 Is very good meat in Lent,  
 But a hare that is hoar  
 Is too much for a score<sup>125</sup>  
 When it hoars<sup>126</sup> ere it be spent.<sup>127</sup>

Romeo, will you come to your father's? We'll to dinner  
 thither. 130

*Romeo* I will follow you.

*Mercutio* Farewell, ancient lady. Farewell, (*singing*) "lady, lady,  
 lady."<sup>128</sup>

## EXEUNT MERCUTIO AND BENVOLIO

119 (1) dialect word for "hare;" (2) a procurer/whorehouse proprietor

120 expression used in hunting hares, when a hare is located

121 (in which there should be no meat)

122 something stale and hoar = rather stale and aged (because Lent lasts forty days and a hare pie would be long since moldy, if kept – unrefrigerated – for any longish period)

123 consumed, used up

124 (1) gray haired, (2) whore (homonym)

125 for a score = (1) excessive, unreasonable, (2) a record of drinks served, in an ale house (bar, saloon)

126 ages

127 be spent = (1) is used up/exhausted, (2) results in an orgasm

128 (refrain from "The Ballad of Constant Susanna": "A woman fair and virtuous / Lady, lady . . ." See Percy, *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, 1:209–10)

- 135 *Nurse* Marry, farewell! I pray you, sir, what saucy merchant<sup>129</sup>  
was this that was so full of his ropery?<sup>130</sup>
- Romeo* A gentleman, Nurse, that loves to hear himself talk and  
will speak more in a minute than he will stand to<sup>131</sup> in a  
month.
- 140 *Nurse* An 'a speak anything against me, I'll take him down,<sup>132</sup>  
an 'a were lustier<sup>133</sup> than he is, and twenty such jacks.<sup>134</sup> And  
if I cannot, I'll find those that shall. Scurvy knave!<sup>135</sup> I am  
none of his flirt gills,<sup>136</sup> I am none of his skains mates.<sup>137</sup> (*to*  
*Peter*) And thou must stand by, too, and suffer<sup>138</sup> every knave  
145 to use me at his pleasure!<sup>139</sup>
- Peter* I saw no man use<sup>140</sup> you at his pleasure. If I had, my  
weapon<sup>141</sup> should quickly have been out, I warrant you. I  
dare draw as soon as another man, if I see occasion<sup>142</sup> in a  
good quarrel,<sup>143</sup> and the law on my side.
- 150 *Nurse* Now, afore God, I am so vexed that every part about me  
quivers. Scurvy knave! (*to Romeo*) Pray you, sir, a word, and as

129 shopkeeper, tradesman (insulting, when applied to a "gentleman")

130 knavery, tricks

131 stand to = act upon

132 take him down = (1) rebuke, reprimand, (2) humiliate ("take him down a  
peg")

133 (1) stronger, (2) more confident

134 low fellows, knaves

135 scurvy knave = worthless/contemptible/low/badmannered rascal/  
rogue\*

136 flirt gills = women of loose/light behavior

137 skains mates = cut-throat companions ("skain" = long Irish knife)

138 allow, tolerate

139 at his pleasure = as he pleases

140 have sexual intercourse with

141 (1) sword, (2) penis

142 (1) favorable circumstances, good reason, (2) pretext, excuse

143 cause, reason

I told you, my young lady bid me enquire you out. What she bid me say, I will keep to myself, but first let me tell ye, if ye should lead her into a fool's paradise, as they say, it were a very gross kind of behavior, as they say; for the gentlewoman is young, and therefore, if you should deal double with her, truly it were an ill thing to be offered to any gentlewoman, and very weak dealing.<sup>144</sup> 155

*Romeo* Nurse, commend me to thy lady and mistress. I protest unto thee – 160

*Nurse* Good heart, and I faith I will tell her as much. Lord, Lord, she will be a joyful woman.

*Romeo* What wilt thou tell her, Nurse? Thou dost not mark<sup>145</sup> me.

*Nurse* I will tell her, sir, that you do protest,<sup>146</sup> which, as I take it, is a gentlemanlike offer.<sup>147</sup> 165

*Romeo* Bid her devise<sup>148</sup>  
Some means to come to shrift this afternoon,  
And there she shall at Friar Laurence<sup>149</sup> cell  
Be shrived<sup>150</sup> and married. Here is<sup>151</sup> for thy pains. 170

*Nurse* No, truly, sir; not a penny.

*Romeo* Go to! I say you shall. (*she takes the offered gratuity*)

*Nurse* This afternoon, sir? Well, she shall be there.

144 weak dealing = feeble, immoral business

145 pay attention to\*

146 declare/affirm/vow in solemn terms

147 proposal of marriage

148 plan, think out, contrive\*

149 (the original printed texts of the play agree on "Friar Laurence cell." Modern editors add an apostrophe after Laurence: Laurence'. This preserves the prosody but introduces a form unknown in English)

150 given penance and absolution, after confession

151 is something



*Romeo* And stay, good Nurse, behind the abbey wall.

175     Within this hour my man shall be with thee  
       And bring thee cords<sup>152</sup> made like a tackled stair,<sup>153</sup>  
       Which to the high topgallant<sup>154</sup> of my joy  
       Must be my convoy<sup>155</sup> in the secret night.  
       Farewell. Be trusty,<sup>156</sup> and I'll quit<sup>157</sup> thy pains.

180     Farewell. Commend me to thy mistress.

*Nurse* Now God in heaven bless thee. Hark<sup>158</sup> you, sir.

*Romeo* What say'st thou, my dear Nurse?

*Nurse* Is your man secret? Did you ne'er hear say,  
       Two may keep counsel, putting one away?<sup>159</sup>

185     *Romeo* I warrant thee my man's as true as steel.

*Nurse* Well, sir, my mistress is the sweetest lady. Lord, Lord!

      When 'twas<sup>160</sup> a little prating<sup>161</sup> thing – O there is a  
       nobleman in town, one Paris, that would fain lay knife  
       aboard,<sup>162</sup> but she, good soul, had as lief<sup>163</sup> see a toad, a  
 190     very<sup>164</sup> toad, as see him. I anger her sometimes, and tell her  
       that Paris is the properer<sup>165</sup> man, but I'll warrant you, when I

152 ropes

153 tackled stair = ladder made of ropes

154 the top of a ship's tallest mast

155 guidance, protection

156 trustworthy, reliable

157 reward, repay

158 listen

159 putting one away = removing/getting rid of/sending away one of the two

160 she was

161 chattering

162 lay knife aboard = set his weapon (sexual allusion) on her

163 as lief = rather

164 honest to God

165 more worthy, better looking

say so, she looks as pale as any clout<sup>166</sup> in the versal<sup>167</sup> world.

Doth not rosemary and Romeo begin both with a letter?

*Romeo* Ay, Nurse. What of that? Both with an R?

*Nurse* Ah, mocker! That's the dog's name. R<sup>168</sup> is for the – No, 195

I know. It begins with some other letter, and she hath the prettiest sententious<sup>169</sup> of it, of you and rosemary, that it would do you good to hear it.

*Romeo* Commend me to thy lady.<sup>170</sup>

*Nurse* Ay, a thousand times. 200

EXIT ROMEO

Peter!

*Peter* Anon.

*Nurse* Before, and apace.<sup>171</sup>

EXEUNT

166 scrap of cloth, rag

167 whole, universal

168 sound of a dog growling?

169 aphoristic (terse, proverbial) way of speech

170 (a polite dismissal)

171 before, and apace = go in front of me, and quickly

SCENE 5  
*Capulet's orchard*

ENTER JULIET

*Juliet* The clock struck nine when I did send the Nurse;

In half an hour she promised to return.

Perchance<sup>1</sup> she cannot meet<sup>2</sup> him. That's not so.

O she is lame.<sup>3</sup> Love's heralds<sup>4</sup> should be thoughts,

5 Which ten times faster glide than the sun's beams

Driving back shadows over lowering<sup>5</sup> hills.

Therefore do nimble-pinioned<sup>6</sup> doves draw Love,<sup>7</sup>

And therefore hath<sup>8</sup> the wind-swift<sup>9</sup> Cupid wings.

Now is the sun upon the highmost hill

10 Of this day's journey, and from nine till twelve

Is three long hours,<sup>10</sup> yet she is not come.

Had she affections<sup>11</sup> and warm youthful blood

She would be as swift in motion as a ball.

My words would bandy<sup>12</sup> her to my sweet love,

15 And his to me.

1 perhaps

2 find

3 infirm, halting, crippled

4 messengers

5 dark, threatening (bisyllabic; the first syllable rhymes with "out" or "ouch")

6 nimble-pinioned = quick/agile/light-winged

7 draw Love = pull the chariot of Venus

8 likewise/also has

9 wind-swift = (compound adjective) swift as wind

10 (bisyllabic: OWerz)(again, rhymes with FLOWerz)

11 feelings, emotions, passions

12 strike, hit (from tennis)\*

But old folks, many feign as<sup>13</sup> they were dead –  
Unwieldy, slow, heavy and pale as lead.

ENTER NURSE AND PETER

O God, she comes! O honey Nurse, what news?  
Hast thou met with him? Send thy man away.

*Nurse* Peter, stay at the gate.

20

EXIT PETER

*Juliet* Now, good sweet Nurse – O Lord, why look'st thou sad?  
Though news be sad, yet tell them<sup>14</sup> merrily.  
If good, thou shamest the music of sweet news  
By playing it<sup>15</sup> to me with so sour a face.

*Nurse* I am aweary, give me leave<sup>16</sup> awhile.

25

Fie, how my bones ache! What a jaunce<sup>17</sup> have I!

*Juliet* I would thou hadst my bones, and I thy news.

Nay, come, I pray thee speak. Good, good Nurse, speak.

*Nurse* Jesu, what haste! Can you not stay awhile?

Do you not see that I am out of breath?

30

*Juliet* How art thou out of breath when thou hast breath  
To say to me that thou art out of breath?

The excuse that thou dost make in this delay

Is longer than the tale thou dost excuse.<sup>18</sup>

Is thy news good or bad? Answer to that.

35

13 feign as = act as if they believe themselves, pretend to be

14 ("news" = plural)

15 (the music)

16 give me leave = please leave me alone

17 prancing (like a horse obliged to do tricks)

18 decline/beg off from doing, with apologies/explanations

Say either, and I'll stay the circumstance.<sup>19</sup>

Let me be satisfied: is't good or bad?

*Nurse* Well, you have made a simple<sup>20</sup> choice. You know not  
 how to choose a man. Romeo? No, not he. Though his face  
 40 be better than any man's, yet his leg excels all men's, and for  
 a hand and a foot, and a body, though they be not<sup>21</sup> to be  
 talked on, yet they are past compare. He is not the flower of  
 courtesy, but I'll warrant him as gentle as a lamb. Go thy ways,  
 wench.<sup>22</sup> Serve God. What, have you dined at home?

45 *Juliet* No, no. But all this did I know before.

What says he of our marriage? What of that?

*Nurse* Lord, how my head aches! What a head have I!

It beats as<sup>23</sup> it would fall in twenty pieces.

My back o' t' other side – ah, my back, my back!

50 Beshrew<sup>24</sup> your heart for sending me about

To catch my death with jauncing up and down.

*Juliet* I' faith, I am sorry that thou art not well.

Sweet, sweet, sweet Nurse, tell me, what says my love?

*Nurse* Your love says, like an honest gentleman, and a courteous,  
 55 and a kind, and a handsome, and, I warrant, a virtuous –  
 Where is your mother?

*Juliet* Where is my mother? Why, she is within.

Where should she be? How oddly thou repliest!

“Your love says, like an honest gentleman,

Where is your mother?”

19 details of time, place, manner, and so on

20 dismal, worthless, stupid

21 not worthy, poor, dismal, silly, foolish

22 girl

23 as if

24 hang, a curse on\*

- Nurse* O God's Lady dear! 60  
 Are you so hot?<sup>25</sup> Marry come up,<sup>26</sup> I trow.<sup>27</sup>  
 Is this the poultice for my aching bones?  
 Henceforward do your messages yourself.
- Juliet.* Here's such a coil!<sup>28</sup> Come, what says Romeo?
- Nurse.* Have you got leave<sup>29</sup> to go to shrift to-day? 65
- Juliet.* I have.
- Nurse.* Then hie<sup>30</sup> you hence to Friar Laurence cell.  
 There stays a husband to make you a wife.  
 Now comes the wanton<sup>31</sup> blood up in your cheeks:  
 They'll be in scarlet straight<sup>32</sup> at any news. 70  
 Hie you to church, I must<sup>33</sup> another way  
 To fetch a ladder, by the which your love  
 Must climb a bird's nest soon when it is dark.  
 I am the drudge, and toil<sup>34</sup> in your delight,  
 But you shall bear the burden<sup>35</sup> soon at night.<sup>36</sup> 75  
 Go, I'll to dinner. Hie you to the cell.
- Juliet* Hie to high fortune! Honest Nurse, farewell.

## EXEUNT

25 feverish, excited, lustful

26 marry come up = well, hoity toity

27 it seems to me

28 confusion, fuss

29 permission

30 hurry

31 (1) wild, skittish, (2) lascivious, lewd

32 without delay, immediately

33 must go/proceed

34 work hard

35 load: (1) the work, (2) have the weight of a man on you

36 at night = tonight, this night

## SCENE 6

*Friar Laurence's cell*

ENTER FRIAR LAURENCE AND ROMEO

*Friar* So smile the heavens upon this holy actThat afterhours<sup>1</sup> with sorrow chide us not.*Romeo* Amen, amen. But come what<sup>2</sup> sorrow can,<sup>3</sup>It cannot countervail<sup>4</sup> the exchange of joy<sup>5</sup>

5 That one short minute gives me in her sight.

Do thou but close<sup>6</sup> our hands with holy words,

Then love-devouring death do what he dare –

It is enough I may but call her mine.

*Friar* These violent<sup>7</sup> delights have violent ends10 And in their triumph die, like fire and powder,<sup>8</sup>

Which, as they kiss, consume. The sweetest honey

Is loathsome in his own deliciousness

And in the taste confounds<sup>9</sup> the appetite.

Therefore love moderately. Long love doth so.

15 Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow.

ENTER JULIET

Here comes the lady. O, so light a foot

Will ne'er wear out the everlasting flint.<sup>10</sup>

1 hours yet to come, the future

2 whatever

3 can do

4 match, equal

5 exchange of joy = mutual joy, joy given and received

6 unite, bind (verb)

7 vehement, very strong/intense

8 gunpowder

9 destroys, ruins

10 ground paved with stone

A lover may bestride the gossamer<sup>11</sup>  
 That idles<sup>12</sup> in the wanton summer air,  
 And yet not fall, so light<sup>13</sup> is vanity.<sup>14</sup> 20

*Juliet* Good even to my ghostly confessor.<sup>15</sup>

*Friar* Romeo shall thank thee,<sup>16</sup> daughter, for us both.

## ROMEO KISSES HER

*Juliet* As much to him,<sup>17</sup> else is his thanks too much.

## JULIET KISSES ROMEO

*Romeo* Ah, Juliet, if the measure<sup>18</sup> of thy joy  
 Be heaped like mine, and that<sup>19</sup> thy skill be more 25  
 To blazon<sup>20</sup> it, then sweeten with thy breath<sup>21</sup>  
 This neighbor<sup>22</sup> air, and let rich music's tongue  
 Unfold<sup>23</sup> the imagined<sup>24</sup> happiness that both  
 Receive in either<sup>25</sup> by this dear encounter.<sup>26</sup>

*Juliet* Conceit<sup>27</sup> more rich in matter than in words 30

11 filmy spiderwebs

12 lazes (verb)

13 inconsequential, of no importance, of very little weight

14 foolishness, worldly pleasure (which are the same, to Friar Laurence)

15 (CONfesSOR)

16 with a kiss

17 as much to him = I must give as much to him

18 measuring utensil/cup

19 if

20 (1) depict, paint, (2) boast of, proclaim

21 sweeten with thy breath = speak words in

22 nearby, adjoining, surrounding

23 disclose, make clear

24 prospective, future

25 both receive in either = we both of us receive

26 dear encounter = glorious/noble meeting

27 idea, conception★



Brag of his substance,<sup>28</sup> not of ornament.  
 They are but beggars that<sup>29</sup> can count their worth.  
 But my true love is<sup>30</sup> grown to such excess  
 I cannot sum up sum<sup>31</sup> of half my wealth.

35 *Friar* Come, come with me, and we will make short work,  
 For, by your leaves,<sup>32</sup> you shall not stay<sup>33</sup> alone  
 Till Holy Church incorporate two in one.

EXEUNT

28 his substance = its reality

29 those who

30 has

31 sum up sum = sum up (verb) the sum (noun)

32 by your leaves = with the permission of you both

33 remain, be left

# Act 3



## SCENE I

*A public place*

ENTER MERCUTIO, BENVOLIO, AND MEN

*Benvolio* I pray thee, good Mercutio, let's retire.<sup>1</sup>

The day is hot, the Capulets abroad,<sup>2</sup>

And if we meet, we shall not scape<sup>3</sup> a brawl,

For now, these hot days, is the mad<sup>4</sup> blood stirring.

*Mercutio* Thou art like one of these fellows that, when he enters  
the confines of a tavern, claps me<sup>5</sup> his sword upon the table  
and says "God send me<sup>6</sup> no need of thee!" and by the  
operation<sup>7</sup> of the second cup<sup>8</sup> draws him<sup>9</sup> on the drawer,<sup>10</sup>

1 leave, withdraw

2 are out and about

3 escape

4 mad blood = frenzied, foolish, extravagantly reckless emotions

5 sets/bangs noisily

6 God send me = may God not send me

7 working

8 drink

9 draws him = draws his weapon

10 tapster, bar man

when indeed there is no need.

10 *Benvolio* Am I like such a fellow?

*Mercutio* Come, come, thou art as hot a jack<sup>11</sup> in thy mood as any in Italy; and as soon moved to be moody,<sup>12</sup> and as soon moody to be moved.

*Benvolio* And what to?

15 *Mercutio* Nay, an there were two such, we should have none shortly,<sup>13</sup> for one would kill the other. Thou! Why, thou wilt quarrel with a man that hath a hair more or a hair less in his beard than thou hast. Thou wilt quarrel with a man for racking nuts, having no other reason but because thou hast  
20 hazel<sup>14</sup> eyes. What eye but such an eye would spy out<sup>15</sup> such a quarrel? Thy head is as full of quarrels as an egg is full of meat,<sup>16</sup> and yet thy head hath been beaten as addle<sup>17</sup> as an egg for quarreling. Thou hast quarreled with a man for coughing in the street, because he hath wakened thy dog that  
25 hath lain asleep in the sun. Didst thou not fall out with a tailor for wearing his new doublet<sup>18</sup> before Easter,<sup>19</sup> with another for tying his new shoes with an old riband?<sup>20</sup> And yet thou wilt<sup>21</sup> tutor<sup>22</sup> me from quarreling!

11 man

12 (1) haughty, stubborn, angry, (2) melancholy, sullen

13 speedily, quickly

14 the reddish brown color of a ripe hazelnut

15 spy out = discover, seek out

16 edible matter, food

17 crazy, confused

18 close-fitting body garment, ancestor of modern coats and jackets

19 (the fashion season began at Easter)

20 ribbon

21 want to

22 teach, instruct (verb)

*Benvolio* An I were so apt<sup>23</sup> to quarrel as thou art, any man  
should buy the fee simple<sup>24</sup> of my life for an hour and a  
quarter.<sup>25</sup> 30

*Mercutio* The fee simple? O simple!<sup>26</sup>

ENTER TYBALT AND OTHERS

*Benvolio* By my head, here come the Capulets.

*Mercutio* By my heel,<sup>27</sup> I care not.

*Tybalt* (to other Capulets) Follow me close, for I will speak to  
them. 35

Gentlemen, good den. A word with one of you.

*Mercutio* And but one word with one of us? Couple it with  
something, make it a word and a blow.

*Tybalt* You shall find me apt enough to that, sir, an you will  
give me occasion. 40

*Mercutio* Could you not take some occasion without giving?<sup>28</sup>

*Tybalt* Mercutio, thou consortest<sup>29</sup> with Romeo.

*Mercutio* Consort? What, dost thou make us minstrels?<sup>30</sup> An  
thou make minstrels of us, look to hear nothing but  
discords.<sup>31</sup> (*indicates his sword*) Here's my fiddlestick,<sup>32</sup> here's 45

23 ready, prepared, prompt\*

24 fee simple = complete and unconditional ownership (usually of land)

25 for an hour and a quarter = for the brief period my life, were I that  
quarrelsome, could be expected to last

26 O simple! = what an awful/pitiful metaphor

27 foot (scornful)

28 without giving = without being given one

29 associate, keep company

30 musicians

31 dissonances, quarrels

32 fiddlestick = violin bow

that<sup>33</sup> shall make you dance. Zounds,<sup>34</sup> consort!

*Benvolio* We talk here in the public haunt<sup>35</sup> of men.

Either withdraw unto some private place

And reason coldly<sup>36</sup> of your grievances,

50 Or else depart. Here all eyes gaze on us.

*Mercutio* Men's eyes were made to look, and let them gaze.

I will not budge for no<sup>37</sup> man's pleasure.

## ENTER ROMEO

*Tybalt* Well, peace be with you, sir. Here comes my man.<sup>38</sup>

*Mercutio* But I'll be hanged,<sup>39</sup> sir, if he wear<sup>40</sup> your livery.

55 Marry, go before to field,<sup>41</sup> he'll be your follower.<sup>42</sup>

Your worship<sup>43</sup> in that sense may call him man.

*Tybalt* Romeo, the love I bear thee can afford<sup>44</sup>

No better term than this: thou art a villain.

*Romeo* Tybalt, the reason that I have to love thee

60 Doth much excuse the appertaining<sup>45</sup> rage

To such a greeting. Villain am I none.

Therefore farewell. I see thou knowest me not.

33 that which

34 God's wounds (imprecation)

35 place

36 reason coldly = discuss/converse/argue calmly

37 any

38 (1) the man I'm looking for, (2) servant

39 I'll be hanged = I'll be damned

40 wears

41 go before to field = if you lead the way to the dueling field

42 be your follower = (1) he'll follow you, (2) then he'll be your "servant" (do the courteous thing)

43 your worship = a gentleman/man of high honor like you (sarcastic)

44 supply, furnish (since he in fact feels *no* love for Romeo)

45 proper, appropriate

- Tybalt* Boy, this shall not excuse the injuries  
That thou hast done me. Therefore turn and draw.
- Romeo* I do protest I never injured thee, 65  
But love thee better than thou canst devise,<sup>46</sup>  
Till thou shalt know the reason of my love.  
And so good Capulet, which name I tender<sup>47</sup>  
As dearly as mine own, be satisfied.
- Mercutio* O calm, dishonorable, vile submission! 70  
*Alla stoccata*<sup>48</sup> carries it away. (*he draws*)  
Tybalt, you ratcatcher,<sup>49</sup> will you walk?<sup>50</sup>
- Tybalt* What wouldst thou have<sup>51</sup> with me?
- Mercutio* Good King of Cats, nothing but one of your nine lives.  
That I mean to make bold withal and, as<sup>52</sup> you shall use<sup>53</sup> me 75  
hereafter, dry beat<sup>54</sup> the rest of the eight. Will you pluck<sup>55</sup>  
your sword out of his pilcher<sup>56</sup> by the ears?<sup>57</sup> Make haste, lest  
mine be about<sup>58</sup> your ears ere it be out.
- Tybalt* I am for you. (*he draws*)
- Romeo* Gentle Mercutio, put thy rapier up. 80

46 conceive, imagine

47 cherish, regard

48 *alla stoccata* = fencing thrust: that is, Tybalt (Italian dueling term: *stoccata* = stab, thrust)

49 (as cats are ratcatchers)

50 step aside, withdraw (to fight a duel)

51 do (though Mercutio chooses to understand it, literally, as “have”)

52 according to how

53 deal with, behave toward

54 dry beat = beat soundly/severely\*

55 pull, snatch (negative usage)

56 scabbard (contemptuous)

57 hilt (which protrudes on either side more or less like ears: a contemptuous metaphor)

58 all around

*Mercutio* (to *Tybalt*) Come, sir, your *passado*!

## THEY FIGHT

*Romeo* Draw, Benvolio, beat down their weapons.

Gentlemen, for shame! Forbear<sup>59</sup> this outrage!<sup>60</sup>

*Tybalt*, *Mercutio*! The Prince expressly hath

85 Forbid this bandying in Verona streets.

Hold, *Tybalt*! Good *Mercutio*!

TYBALT UNDER ROMEO'S ARM STABS MERCUTIO  
AND FLIES WITH HIS FOLLOWERS

*Mercutio* I am hurt.

A plague<sup>61</sup> o' both your houses. I am sped.<sup>62</sup>

Is he gone and hath nothing?

*Benvolio* What, art thou hurt?

*Mercutio* Ay, ay, a scratch, a scratch. Marry, 'tis enough.

90 Where is my page? (to *Page*) Go, villain, fetch a surgeon.<sup>63</sup>

## EXIT PAGE

*Romeo* Courage, man. The hurt cannot be much.

*Mercutio* No, 'tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church  
door, but 'tis enough, 'twill serve. Ask for me tomorrow, and

95 you shall find me a grave man. I am peppered,<sup>64</sup> I warrant, for  
this world. A plague o' both your houses. Zounds, a dog, a rat,

59 give up, cease, abstain from

60 rashness, foolhardiness, mad/passionate behavior, insolence

61 curse, divine punishment

62 finished, killed

63 medical man

64 ruined, killed

a mouse, a cat, to scratch<sup>65</sup> a man to death. A braggart, a rogue, a villain, that fights by the book of arithmetic. Why the devil came you between us? I was hurt under your arm.

*Romeo* I thought all for the best.

*Mercutio* Help me into some house, Benvolio, 100  
 Or I shall faint. A plague o' both your houses.  
 They have made worms' meat of me. I have it,<sup>66</sup>  
 And soundly too. Your houses!

EXIT, SUPPORTED BY BENVOLIO

*Romeo* This gentleman, the Prince's near ally,<sup>67</sup> 105  
 My very friend, hath got this mortal hurt  
 In my behalf – my reputation stained  
 With Tybalt's slander<sup>68</sup> – Tybalt, that an hour<sup>69</sup>  
 Hath been my kinsman. O sweet Juliet,  
 Thy beauty hath made me effeminate  
 And in my temper<sup>70</sup> softened valor's steel.<sup>71</sup> 110

ENTER BENVOLIO

*Benvolio* O Romeo, Romeo, brave<sup>72</sup> Mercutio's dead,  
 That gallant<sup>73</sup> spirit hath aspired<sup>74</sup> the clouds,  
 Which too untimely here did scorn<sup>75</sup> the earth.

65 (1) injure with claws/nails, (2) skirmish, fight without doing serious harm

66 (modern usage: "I've had it")

67 kindred, relation (ALLY)

68 insult, malicious defamation/falsehood

69 that an hour = who for one hour

70 (1) character, temperament, (2) the tempering/hardening of steel

71 valor's steel = the toughness of courage/manliness

72 noble, splendid

73 excellent, fine

74 risen/soared/mounted to

75 defied, disdained



Romeo This day's black fate<sup>76</sup> on moe days<sup>77</sup> doth depend.<sup>78</sup>

115 This<sup>79</sup> but begins the woe others<sup>80</sup> must end.

ENTER TYBALT

*Benvolio* Here comes the furious<sup>81</sup> Tybalt back again.

Romeo Alive in triumph, and Mercutio slain?

Away to heaven respective lenity,<sup>82</sup>

And fire-eyed fury be my conduct<sup>83</sup> now!

120 Now, Tybalt, take the "villain" back again

That late thou gavest me, for Mercutio's soul

Is but a little way above our heads,

Staying for thine to keep him company.

Either thou or I, or both, must go with him.

125 *Tybalt* Thou wretched boy, that didst consort him<sup>84</sup> here,  
Shalt with him hence.

Romeo (*drawing his sword*) This shall determine that.

THEY FIGHT. TYBALT FALLS

*Benvolio* Romeo, away, be gone.

The citizens are up,<sup>85</sup> and Tybalt slain.

Stand not amazed.<sup>86</sup> The Prince will doom thee<sup>87</sup> death

76 what is destined to happen, destiny

77 moe days = more days, later times

78 doth depend = (1) is contingent upon, (2) will follow from

79 this day

80 other days

81 raging, violent

82 respective lenity = courteous/careful / civil mildness/gentleness

83 guidance

84 with him

85 are up = have risen, are excited/roused

86 bewildered, stunned

87 doom thee = sentence★ you to (verb)

If thou art taken.<sup>88</sup> Hence, be gone, away! 130

*Romeo* O I am fortune's fool.

*Benvolio* Why dost thou stay?

EXIT ROMEO

ENTER CITIZENS

*Citizen* Which way ran he that killed Mercutio?

Tybalt, that murderer, which way ran he?

*Benvolio* There lies that Tybalt.

*Citizen* Up,<sup>89</sup> sir, go with me. 135

I charge<sup>90</sup> thee in the Prince's name obey.

ENTER PRINCE, ATTENDED, OLD MONTAGUE, CAPULET,  
THEIR WIVES, AND OTHERS

*Prince* Where are the vile beginners of this fray?

*Benvolio* O noble Prince, I can discover<sup>91</sup> all

The unlucky manage<sup>92</sup> of this fatal brawl.

There lies the man, slain by young Romeo, 140

That slew thy kinsman, brave Mercutio.

*Lady Capulet* Tybalt, my cousin. O my brother's child!

O Prince, O husband, O the blood is spilled

Of my dear kinsman. Prince, as thou art true,

For blood of ours shed blood of Montague. 145

O cousin, cousin.

*Prince* Benvolio, who began this bloody fray?

88 caught, captured, seized\*

89 come

90 command

91 make known, disclose

92 actions, conduct

*Benvolio* Tybalt, here slain, whom Romeo's hand did slay.  
 Romeo, that spoke him fair,<sup>93</sup> bid him bethink<sup>94</sup>  
 150 How nice<sup>95</sup> the quarrel was, and urged withal<sup>96</sup>  
 Your high displeasure.<sup>97</sup> All this – utterèd<sup>98</sup>  
 With gentle breath, calm look, knees humbly bowed –  
 Could not take truce<sup>99</sup> with the unruly spleen<sup>100</sup>  
 Of Tybalt, deaf to peace, but that he tilts<sup>101</sup>  
 155 With piercing steel at bold Mercutio's breast,  
 Who, all as hot, turns<sup>102</sup> deadly point to point,  
 And, with a martial scorn, with one hand beats  
 Cold death aside and with the other sends  
 It<sup>103</sup> back to Tybalt, whose dexterity  
 160 Retorts<sup>104</sup> it. Romeo he cries<sup>105</sup> aloud,  
 "Hold, friends! Friends, part!" and swifter than his tongue  
 His agile arm beats down their fatal points  
 And 'twixt them rushes, underneath whose arm  
 An envious thrust from Tybalt hit the life  
 165 Of stout<sup>106</sup> Mercutio, and then Tybalt fled,  
 But by and by comes back to Romeo,

93 courteously

94 remember

95 foolish, senseless, trivial\*

96 in addition, besides

97 high displeasure = exalted/grave anger

98 your HIGH disPLEAsure ALL this UTterED

99 take truce = make peace

100 unruly spleen = disorderly/ungovernable hot/irritable/capricious temper

101 thrusts/strikes at

102 returns, sends back

103 cold death (his own sword point)

104 replies/returns in kind

105 Romeo he cries = Romeo cries

106 proud, brave, formidable

Who had but newly entertained<sup>107</sup> revenge,  
 And to't<sup>108</sup> they go like lightning, for, ere I  
 Could draw<sup>109</sup> to part them, was stout Tybalt slain  
 And as he fell did Romeo turn and fly.<sup>110</sup> 170  
 This is the truth, or let Benvolio die.

*Lady Capulet* He is a kinsman to the Montague.  
 Affection<sup>111</sup> makes him false, he speaks not true.  
 Some twenty of them fought in this black<sup>112</sup> strife,  
 And all those twenty could but kill one life. 175  
 I beg for justice, which thou, Prince, must give.  
 Romeo slew Tybalt; Romeo must not live.

*Prince* Romeo slew him, he slew Mercutio.  
 Who now the price<sup>113</sup> of his dear<sup>114</sup> blood doth owe?  
*Montague* Not Romeo, Prince. He was Mercutio's friend. 180  
 His fault concludes but what the law should end,  
 The life of Tybalt.

*Prince* And for that offense  
 Immediately we do exile him hence.  
 I have an interest in your hate's proceeding,  
 My blood<sup>115</sup> for your rude brawls doth lie ableeding. 185  
 But I'll amerce<sup>116</sup> you with so strong<sup>117</sup> a fine

107 considered

108 to't (to it) = set to it, attack, fight

109 draw his sword

110 flee

111 (1) kind feeling, (2) bias, partiality

112 foul

113 payment, cost

114 precious

115 my blood = my family's blood, Mercutio being his kinsman

116 punish

117 powerful, massive, severe, heavy

That you shall all repent the loss of mine.

I will be deaf to pleading and excuses;

Nor<sup>118</sup> tears nor prayers shall purchase out<sup>119</sup> abuses.

190 Therefore use none. Let Romeo hence<sup>120</sup> in haste,

Else, when he is found, that hour<sup>121</sup> is his last.

Bear hence<sup>122</sup> this body, and attend<sup>123</sup> our<sup>124</sup> will.

Mercy but murders, pardoning<sup>125</sup> those that kill.

EXEUNT

118 neither

119 purchase out = redeem

120 go away (go hence)

121 (bisyllabic: AWe)

122 away

123 pay heed to

124 my (the royal "we")

125 PARDning

## SCENE 2

*Capulet's orchard*

ENTER JULIET

*Juliet* Gallop apace,<sup>1</sup> you fiery-footed<sup>2</sup> steeds,  
 Towards Phoebus' lodging.<sup>3</sup> Such a wagoner<sup>4</sup>  
 As Phaeton<sup>5</sup> would whip you to the west  
 And bring in cloudy night immediately.  
 Spread thy close<sup>6</sup> curtain, love-performing<sup>7</sup> night, 5  
 That runaway<sup>8</sup> eyes may wink,<sup>9</sup> and Romeo  
 Leap to these arms untalked of and unseen.  
 Lovers can see to do their amorous rites  
 By their own beauties, or, if love be blind,  
 It best agrees with<sup>10</sup> night. Come, civil<sup>11</sup> night, 10  
 Thou sober-suited<sup>12</sup> matron, all in black,  
 And learn me how to lose a winning match,<sup>13</sup>  
 Played for a pair<sup>14</sup> of stainless<sup>15</sup> maidenhoods.

1 swiftly

2 fiery-footed = glowingly hot-footed (as the horses of Phoebus, the sun god, properly are)

3 dwelling (back to their stable, so it will be night)

4 driver (merry, light tone)

5 (sun god's wild-driving son)

6 (1) secret, (2) snug

7 love-performing (compound adjective)

8 gadding about? night wandering?

9 close

10 best agrees with = is most harmonious with, most favorable to

11 polite, well governed, sober

12 sober-suited = dressed soberly

13 lose a winning match = lose virginity but win (1) a husband/mate, (2) the contest

14 (Juliet and Romeo are both virgins)

15 unblemished, pure

Hood<sup>16</sup> my unmanned<sup>17</sup> blood, bating<sup>18</sup> in my cheeks,  
 15 With thy black mantle,<sup>19</sup> till strange<sup>20</sup> love, grown bold,<sup>21</sup>  
 Think true love acted simple modesty.<sup>22</sup>  
 Come, night. Come, Romeo. Come, thou day in night,<sup>23</sup>  
 For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night  
 Whiter than new snow upon a raven's back.  
 20 Come, gentle night. Come, loving, black-browed night,  
 Give me my Romeo. And when I shall die<sup>24</sup>  
 Take him and cut him out in little stars,  
 And he will make the face of heaven so fine  
 That all the world will be in love with night  
 25 And pay no worship to the garish<sup>25</sup> sun.<sup>26</sup>  
 O I have bought<sup>27</sup> the mansion<sup>28</sup> of a love  
 But not possessed it, and though I am sold,<sup>29</sup>  
 Not yet enjoyed. So tedious is this day

16 cover (as young, untrained falcons/hawks are hooded to keep them calm)

17 (1) untrained, not broken in, (2) not subjected to/occupied/possessed by a man

18 fluttering, beating

19 (1) loose, sleeveless cloak, (2) blanket

20 unknown, unfamiliar

21 (1) fearless, (2) without shame

22 think true love acted simple modesty = thinks genuine love performed/represented innocent purity/chastity ("strange love" is the subject of "think")

23 day in night = brightness in darkness

24 (the Elizabethan meaning, sexual climax/orgasm, is plainly most on her mind)

25 gaudy, vulgar, ostentatious

26 ("Take him . . . the garish sun": these four lines make no sense unless Romeo is understood to "die" exactly as Juliet expects to; the verb "take" – which can mean "captivate" as well as "capture," and also has the meaning of "sexually possessing" – then has as its subject the glories that night will bring them)

27 by marriage (both a sacrament *and* a contract)

28 splendid human body (as the mansion "house" inhabited by the soul)

29 I am sold = I, too, as Romeo is, have been sold/acquired in this mutual rite of acquisition

As is the night before some festival  
 To an impatient child that hath new robes<sup>30</sup> 30  
 And may not wear them. O here comes my Nurse.

ENTER NURSE, WITH LADDER OF CORDS

And she brings news, and every tongue that speaks  
 But Romeo's name speaks heavenly eloquence.  
 Now, Nurse, what news? What hast thou there? The cords  
 That Romeo bid thee fetch?

*Nurse* Ay, ay, the cords. 35

SHE THROWS THEM DOWN

*Juliet* Ay me, what news? Why dost thou wring thy hands

*Nurse* Ah, weraday!<sup>31</sup> He's dead, he's dead, he's dead!

We are undone,<sup>32</sup> lady, we are undone.

Alack the day! He's gone, he's killed, he's dead.

*Juliet* Can heaven be so envious?<sup>33</sup>

*Nurse* Romeo can, 40

Though heaven cannot. O Romeo, Romeo,

Who ever would have thought it? Romeo!

*Juliet* What devil art thou that dost torment me thus?

This torture should be roared in dismal hell.

Hath Romeo slain himself? Say thou but "Ay," 45

And that bare vowel "Ay" shall poison more

Than the death darting<sup>34</sup> eye of cockatrice.<sup>35</sup>

I am not I, if there be such an "Ay,"

30 clothes

31 welladay, alas\*

32 ruined, destroyed

33 spiteful, malicious, full of ill will

34 shooting

35 poisonous monster/serpent that can kill by a glance



- Or those eyes<sup>36</sup> shut that make thee answer “Ay.”  
 50 If he be slain, say “Ay,” or if not, “no.”  
 Brief<sup>37</sup> sounds determine of<sup>38</sup> my weal<sup>39</sup> or woe.
- Nurse* I saw the wound, I saw it with mine eyes,  
 (God save the mark!)<sup>40</sup> here on his manly breast.  
 A piteous corse,<sup>41</sup> a bloody piteous corse,  
 55 Pale, pale as ashes, all bedaubed<sup>42</sup> in blood,  
 All in gore<sup>43</sup> blood. I swounded<sup>44</sup> at the sight.
- Juliet* O break,<sup>45</sup> my heart. Poor bankrupt, break at once.  
 To prison, eyes, ne'er look on liberty.  
 Vile earth,<sup>46</sup> to earth resign,<sup>47</sup> end motion<sup>48</sup> here,  
 60 And thou and Romeo press<sup>49</sup> one heavy bier.<sup>50</sup>
- Nurse* O Tybalt, Tybalt, the best friend I had.  
 O courteous Tybalt. Honest gentleman,  
 That ever I should live to see thee dead.
- Juliet* What storm is this that blows so contrary?  
 65 Is Romeo slaughtered, and is Tybalt dead?  
 My dear loved cousin, and my dearer lord?

36 those eyes = Romeo's eyes

37 (1) short, (2) hasty, quick\*

38 either

39 happiness, success

40 God save the mark! = God help/preserve us!

41 corpse

42 spattered

43 thick, congealing blood (adjective)

44 fainted (swooned)

45 (which can also mean “to ruin financially, to bankrupt”)

46 her body

47 to earth resign = to the grave surrender

48 movement (life)

49 weigh down

50 the stand on which coffins are set

- Then, dreadful<sup>51</sup> trumpet, sound the general doom,<sup>52</sup>  
 For who is living, if those two are gone?
- Nurse* Tybalt is gone, and Romeo banishèd.  
 Romeo that killed him, he is banishèd. 70
- Juliet* O God! Did Romeo's hand shed Tybalt's blood?
- Nurse* It did, it did, alas the day, it did.
- Juliet* O serpent heart, hid with a flowering face.  
 Did ever dragon keep<sup>53</sup> so fair a cave?  
 Beautiful tyrant,<sup>54</sup> fiend angelical, 75  
 Dove feathered raven, wolvisch ravening lamb!  
 Despisèd substance of divinest show!<sup>55</sup>  
 Just opposite<sup>56</sup> to what thou justly<sup>57</sup> seem'st:  
 A damnèd saint, an honorable villain!  
 O nature, what hadst thou to do in hell 80  
 When thou didst bower<sup>58</sup> the spirit of a fiend  
 In mortal paradise of such sweet flesh?  
 Was ever book containing such vile matter  
 So fairly bound? O that deceit should dwell  
 In such a gorgeous palace.
- Nurse* There's no trust, 85  
 No faith, no honesty in men, all perjured,  
 All forsworn,<sup>59</sup> all naught, all dissemblers.

51 awe-inspiring

52 general doom = Last Judgment

53 (1) live in, (2) guard

54 desperado, ruffian, villain (in its modern sense)

55 outside appearance

56 just opposite = substance exactly opposite

57 with good reason

58 shelter, enclose

59 liars, breakers of their oaths

Ah, where's my man? Give me some *aqua vitae*.<sup>60</sup>  
 These griefs, these woes, these sorrows make me old.  
 Shame come to Romeo.

90 *Juliet* Blistered be thy tongue  
 For such a wish. He was not born to shame.  
 Upon his brow shame is ashamed to sit,  
 For 'tis a throne where honor may be crowned  
 Sole monarch of the universal earth.

95 O what a beast was I to chide at him.

*Nurse* Will you speak well of him that killed your cousin?

*Juliet* Shall I speak ill of him that is my husband?

Ah, poor my lord,<sup>61</sup> what tongue shall smooth<sup>62</sup> thy name  
 When I, thy three hours wife, have mangled it?

100 But wherefore, villain, didst thou<sup>63</sup> kill my cousin?  
 That villain cousin would have killed my husband.  
 Back, foolish tears, back to your native spring,<sup>64</sup>  
 Your tributary drops<sup>65</sup> belong to woe,  
 Which you, mistaking, offer up to joy.

105 My husband lives, that<sup>66</sup> Tybalt would have slain,  
 And Tybalt's dead, that would have slain my husband.  
 All this is comfort. Wherefore weep I then?  
 Some word there was, worsen than Tybalt's death,  
 That murdered me. I would forget it fain,

60 brandy, whiskey (Latin: "water of life")\*

61 poor my lord = my poor lord

62 clear, polish

63 Romeo

64 native spring = original/natural place of origin/source

65 tributary drops = drops that pay tribute/ swell some larger stream

66 who

But O it presses to<sup>67</sup> my memory 110  
 Like damnèd guilty deeds to sinners' minds.  
 "Tybalt is dead, and Romeo – banishèd."  
 That "banishèd," that one word, "banishèd,"  
 Hath slain ten thousand Tybalts. Tybalt's death  
 Was woe enough, if it had ended there, 115  
 Or if sour woe delights in fellowship<sup>68</sup>  
 And needly<sup>69</sup> will be ranked<sup>70</sup> with other griefs,  
 Why followed not, when she said "Tybalt's dead,"  
 "Thy father," or "thy mother" – nay, or both,  
 Which modern lamentation might have moved?<sup>71</sup> 120  
 But with a rearward<sup>72</sup> following Tybalt's death,  
 "Romeo is banishèd" – to speak that word  
 Is father, mother, Tybalt, Romeo, Juliet,  
 All slain, all dead. "Romeo is banishèd":  
 There is no end, no limit, measure,<sup>73</sup> bound,<sup>74</sup> 125  
 In that word's death, no words can that woe sound.<sup>75</sup>  
 Where is my father and my mother, Nurse?  
*Nurse* Weeping and wailing over Tybalt's corse.  
 Will you go to them? I will bring you thither.  
*Juliet* Wash they his wounds with tears? Mine shall be spent, 130  
 When theirs are dry, for Romeo's banishment.

67 presses to = forces itself on, attacks/assails/harasses

68 company

69 necessity

70 wishes to be joined/positioned with

71 modern lamentation might have moved = might have provoked/caused ordinary lamentation

72 later/subsequent addition (literally: "rearguard")

73 quantity

74 boundary

75 reach to the bottom of

Take up those cords. Poor ropes, you are beguiled,  
Both you and I, for Romeo is exiled.<sup>76</sup>

He made you for a highway to my bed,

135 But I, a maid, die maiden widowèd.

Come, cords, come, Nurse. I'll to my wedding bed,  
And death, not Romeo, take my maidenhead.

*Nurse* Hie to your chamber. I'll find Romeo  
To comfort you. I wot<sup>77</sup> well where he is.

140 Hark ye, your Romeo will be here at night.

I'll to him. He is hid at Laurence cell.

*Juliet* O find him! Give this ring to my true knight  
And bid him come to take his last farewell.

EXEUNT

76 (exILED)

77 know

SCENE 3  
*Friar Laurence's cell*

ENTER FRIAR LAURENCE

*Friar* Romeo, come forth, come forth, thou fearful<sup>1</sup> man.  
 Affliction is enamored of thy parts,<sup>2</sup>  
 And thou art wedded to calamity.

ENTER ROMEO

*Romeo* Father, what news? What is the Prince's doom?  
 What sorrow craves acquaintance at my hand 5  
 That I yet know not?

*Friar* Too familiar  
 Is my dear son with such sour company.  
 I bring thee tidings of the Prince's doom.

*Romeo* What less than doomsday is the Prince's doom?

*Friar* A gentler judgment vanished<sup>3</sup> from his lips: 10  
 Not body's death, but body's banishment.

*Romeo* Ha, banishment? Be merciful, say "death,"  
 For exile hath more terror in his look,  
 Much more than death. Do not say "banishment."

*Friar* Hence from Verona art thou banishèd. 15  
 Be patient, for the world is broad and wide.

*Romeo* There is no world without<sup>4</sup> Verona walls,  
 But purgatory, torture, hell itself.  
 Hence banishèd is banished from the world,

1 frightened, terrorized

2 personal qualities/attributes\*

3 fell (and then disappeared, as spoken words necessarily do)

4 outside

20 And world's exile<sup>5</sup> is death. Then "banishment"  
 Is death mis-termed. Calling death "banishment"<sup>6</sup>  
 Thou cut'st my head off with a golden axe  
 And smilest upon the stroke that murders me.

*Friar* O deadly sin, O rude unthankfulness.

25 Thy fault our law calls death, but the kind Prince,  
 Taking thy part, hath rushed<sup>7</sup> aside the law  
 And turned that black word death to banishment.  
 This is dear mercy, and thou see'st it not.

*Romeo* 'Tis torture, and not mercy. Heaven is here

30 Where Juliet lives, and every cat and dog  
 And little mouse, every unworthy<sup>8</sup> thing,  
 Live here in heaven and may look on her,  
 But Romeo may not. More validity,<sup>9</sup>  
 More honorable<sup>10</sup> state,<sup>11</sup> more courtship<sup>12</sup> lives  
 35 In carrion flies than Romeo. They<sup>13</sup> may seize  
 On the white wonder of dear Juliet's hand  
 And steal immortal blessing from her lips,  
 Who, even in pure and vestal modesty,  
 Still blush, as thinking their own kisses sin,  
 40 But Romeo may not, he is banishèd.

5 (ex)ILE)

6 is DEATH misTERMED. CALLing death BANishMENT

7 forced, driven

8 worthless, undeserving

9 (1) force, strength, effectiveness, (2) value, worth

10 (HONorABLE)

11 manner of existence

12 courtliness

13 there are those who ("they" seems not to refer back, as modern pronouns tend to do, but forward, to "who blush . . . thinking . . .": can we suspect "flies" of existing in "pure and vestal modesty"?)

Flies<sup>14</sup> may do this, but I from this must fly.  
 They are<sup>15</sup> free men, but I am banishèd.  
 And sayest thou yet that exile is not death?  
 Hadst thou no poison mixed, no sharp ground knife,  
 No sudden mean<sup>16</sup> of death, though ne'er so mean,<sup>17</sup> 45  
 But “banishèd” to kill me<sup>18</sup> – “banishèd”?  
 O friar, the damnèd use<sup>19</sup> that word in hell:  
 Howling attends<sup>20</sup> it. How hast thou the heart,  
 Being a divine,<sup>21</sup> a ghostly confessor,<sup>22</sup>  
 A sin absolver, and my friend professed,<sup>23</sup> 50  
 To mangle me with that word “banishèd”?  
*Friar* Thou fond<sup>24</sup> mad man, hear me a little speak.  
*Romeo* O thou wilt speak again of banishment.  
*Friar* I'll give thee armor to keep off that word,  
 Adversity's sweet milk, philosophy, 55  
 To comfort thee, though thou art banishèd.  
*Romeo* Yet “banishèd”? Hang up philosophy.<sup>25</sup>  
 Unless philosophy can make a Juliet,  
 Displant<sup>26</sup> a town, reverse a prince's doom,

14 not only men, but even flies

15 are like?

16 means

17 poor, inferior, debased

18 (the syntax is “hadst thou no poison [etc.] . . . to kill me”)

19 damnèd use: noun + verb

20 follows, accompanies (in hell)

21 clergyman, priest

22 (CONFesSOR)

23 declared, self-acknowledged, ostensible

24 foolish, silly

25 hang up philosophy = philosophy be hanged

26 substitute for



- 60 It helps not, it prevails<sup>27</sup> not. Talk no more.  
*Friar* O then I see that madmen have no ears.  
*Romeo* How should they, when that<sup>28</sup> wise men have no eyes?  
*Friar* Let me dispute<sup>29</sup> with thee of thy estate.<sup>30</sup>  
*Romeo* Thou canst not speak of that<sup>31</sup> thou dost not feel.
- 65 Wert thou as young as I, Juliet thy love,  
 An hour but married, Tybalt murderèd,  
 Doting like me, and like me banishèd,  
 Then mightst thou speak, then mightst thou tear thy hair,  
 And fall upon the ground, as I do now,
- 70 Taking the measure<sup>32</sup> of an unmade<sup>33</sup> grave. (*falls at full length*)

## KNOCK

- Friar* Arise, one knocks. Good Romeo, hide thyself.  
*Romeo* Not I, unless the breath of heartsick groans  
 Mist-like<sup>34</sup> enfold me from the search<sup>35</sup> of eyes.

## KNOCK

- Friar* Hark, how they knock! Who's there? Romeo, arise,  
 75 Thou wilt be taken. – (*to the person knocking*) Stay awhile! –  
 (*to Romeo*) Stand up,

27 succeeds, avails

28 when that = when

29 debate, discuss, argue

30 condition, fortune

31 what

32 taking the measure = measuring

33 not yet made

34 mist-like = like mist

35 scrutiny, examination

KNOCK

run to my study. — (*to the person knocking*) By and by! — (*to Romeo*) God's will,  
 What simpleness<sup>36</sup> is this. — (*to the person knocking*) I come,  
 I come.

KNOCK

Who knocks so hard? Whence come you? What's your will?  
*Nurse* (*within*) Let me come in, and you shall know my errand.  
 I come from Lady Juliet.

*Friar* Welcome then.

80

ENTER NURSE

*Nurse* O holy friar, O tell me, holy friar,  
 Where is my lady's lord, where's Romeo?

*Friar* There on the ground, with his own tears made drunk.

*Nurse* O he is even in my mistress' case,  
 Just in her case. O woeful sympathy,  
 Piteous predicament.<sup>37</sup> Even so lies she,  
 Blubb'ring and weeping, weeping and blubbering.  
 Stand up, stand up! Stand, an you be a man.  
 For Juliet's sake, for her sake, rise and stand!  
 Why should you fall into so deep an O?<sup>38</sup>

85

90

*Romeo* (*rising*) Nurse —

*Nurse* Ah sir, ah sir, death's the end of all.

*Romeo* Spak'st thou of Juliet? How is it with her?

36 foolishness

37 state, situation (usually dangerous)

38 so deep an O = so deep a state of lamentation/groaning

Doth not she think me an old<sup>39</sup> murderer,  
 95 Now<sup>40</sup> I have stained the childhood of our joy  
 With blood removed<sup>41</sup> but little from her own?  
 Where is she? And how doth she? And what says<sup>42</sup>  
 My concealed<sup>43</sup> lady to our canceled love?

*Nurse* O she says nothing, sir, but weeps and weeps,  
 100 And now falls on her bed, and then starts up,  
 And Tybalt calls, and then on Romeo cries,  
 And then down falls again.

*Romeo* As if that name,<sup>44</sup>  
 Shot from the deadly level<sup>45</sup> of a gun,  
 Did murder her, as<sup>46</sup> that name's cursèd hand  
 105 Murdered her kinsman. O tell me, friar, tell me,  
 In what vile part of this anatomy  
 Doth my name lodge?<sup>47</sup> Tell me, that I may sack<sup>48</sup>  
 The hateful mansion.<sup>49</sup>

## HE DRAWS HIS DAGGER

*Friar* Hold thy desp'rate hand.  
 Art thou a man? Thy form cries out thou art,

39 practiced, experienced

40 now that

41 distant in relationship

42 where IS she AND how DOTH she AND what SAYS

43 secret (CONcealed)

44 that name: Romeo

45 aiming

46 just as

47 reside, dwell

48 plunder, despoil

49 (his own body)

Thy tears are womanish, thy wild acts denote<sup>50</sup> 110  
 The unreasonable<sup>51</sup> fury of a beast.  
 Unseemly<sup>52</sup> woman in a seeming<sup>53</sup> man,  
 Or ill beseeeming beast in seeming both!  
 Thou hast amazed me. By my holy order,<sup>54</sup>  
 I thought thy disposition<sup>55</sup> better tempered.<sup>56</sup> 115  
 Hast thou slain Tybalt? Wilt thou slay thyself  
 And slay thy lady, that<sup>57</sup> in thy life lives,  
 By doing damnèd hate upon thyself?  
 Why rail'st<sup>58</sup> thou on thy birth, the heaven, and earth,  
 Since birth and heaven and earth all three do meet 120  
 In thee at once, which thou at once wouldst lose.<sup>59</sup>  
 Fie, fie, thou sham'st thy shape,<sup>60</sup> thy love, thy wit,  
 Which, like a usurer,<sup>61</sup> abound'st in all,<sup>62</sup>  
 And usest<sup>63</sup> none in that true use<sup>64</sup> indeed  
 Which should bedeck<sup>65</sup> thy shape, thy love, thy wit. 125

50 indicate

51 irrational

52 unbecoming, indecent

53 a seeming = an apparent

54 by my holy order: an exclamation/oath

55 nature, temperament, inclination

56 better tempered = more elastic, balanced

57 who

58 speak abusively about

59 which thou at once wouldst lose = if you killed/want to kill yourself

60 human and manly

61 a grasping man who lends money at high rates of interest

62 abound'st in all = fairly teems in you (and in all men?)

63 you use (like a usurer, who illicitly – by church doctrine – charges interest for the “use” of his money)

64 true use: holy use, as opposed to a usurer's illicit use

65 adorn

Thy noble shape is but a form of wax<sup>66</sup>  
 Digressing<sup>67</sup> from the valor of a man;  
 Thy dear love sworn<sup>68</sup> but hollow perjury,<sup>69</sup>  
 Killing that love which thou hast vowed to cherish;  
 130 Thy wit, that ornament to shape and love,  
 Misshapen<sup>70</sup> in the conduct of them both,  
 Like powder<sup>71</sup> in a skillless soldier's flask,<sup>72</sup>  
 Is set afire by thine own ignorance  
 And thou dismembered<sup>73</sup> with thine own defense.<sup>74</sup>  
 135 What, rouse thee, man! Thy Juliet is alive,  
 For whose dear sake thou wast but lately<sup>75</sup> dead.  
 There<sup>76</sup> art thou happy. Tybalt would kill thee,  
 But thou slew'st Tybalt. There art thou happy too.  
 The law, that threatened death, becomes thy friend  
 140 And turns it to exile. There art thou happy.  
 A pack<sup>77</sup> of blessings light upon thy back;  
 Happiness courts thee in her best array;<sup>78</sup>  
 But like a misbehaved and sullen wench  
 Thou pouts upon thy fortune and thy love.

66 a form of wax = a waxen shape

67 swerving, diverging

68 (adjective modifying "love")

69 hollow perjury = empty falsehood

70 distorted, deformed

71 like powder = as gunpowder

72 gunpowder case, made of horn, leather, or metal

73 ripped apart

74 that which should defend you, in Romeo's case "reason," "intellect"

75 not long since

76 in that/her

77 bundle

78 attire, dress

Take heed, take heed, for such<sup>79</sup> die miserable. 145  
 Go get thee to thy love, as was decreed,<sup>80</sup>  
 Ascend her chamber – hence, and comfort her.  
 But look<sup>81</sup> thou stay<sup>82</sup> not till the watch<sup>83</sup> be set,<sup>84</sup>  
 For then thou canst not pass<sup>85</sup> to Mantua,  
 Where thou shalt live till we can find a time 150  
 To blaze<sup>86</sup> your marriage, reconcile your friends,  
 Beg pardon of the Prince, and call thee back  
 With twenty hundred thousand times more joy  
 Than thou wentst forth in lamentation.<sup>87</sup>  
 Go before, Nurse. Commend me to thy lady, 155  
 And bid her hasten all the house to bed,  
 Which heavy sorrow makes them apt unto.  
 Romeo is coming.

*Nurse* O Lord, I could have stayed here all the night  
 To hear good counsel. O what learning is. 160  
 (*to Romeo*) My lord, I'll tell my lady you will come.  
*Romeo* Do so, and bid my sweet prepare to chide.

NURSE STARTS TO LEAVE, THEN TURNS BACK

*Nurse* Here is a ring she bid me give you, sir.  
 Hie you, make haste, for it grows very late.

EXIT NURSE

- 79 such people  
 80 resolved, decided, arranged  
 81 be careful, make sure  
 82 linger  
 83 sentinels, guards (“police”)\*  
 84 set in place (for the night), posted  
 85 get through  
 86 proclaim and publicize  
 87 LAMenTAtiON

165 *Romeo* How well my comfort<sup>88</sup> is revived by this.

*Friar* Go hence, good night – and here stands all your state:

Either be gone before the watch be set,

Or by the break of day, disguised, from hence.

Sojourn in Mantua. I'll find out your man,<sup>89</sup>

170 And he shall signify<sup>90</sup> from time to time

Every good hap<sup>91</sup> to you that chances here.

Give me thy hand. 'Tis late. Farewell, good night.

*Romeo* But that a joy past joy calls out on me,

It were a grief so brief to part<sup>92</sup> with thee.

175 Farewell.

EXEUNT

88 enjoyment, pleasure

89 servant

90 make known

91 good chance/fortune

92 so brief to part = to leave even for such a brief period

## SCENE 4

*Capulet's house*

ENTER OLD CAPULET, LADY CAPULET, AND PARIS

*Capulet* Things have fallen out<sup>1</sup>, sir, so unluckily  
 That we have had no time to move<sup>2</sup> our daughter.  
 Look you, she loved her kinsman Tybalt dearly,  
 And so did I. Well, we were born to die.  
 'Tis very late; she'll not come down tonight. 5  
 I promise you, but for your company,  
 I would have been abed an hour ago.

*Paris* These times of woe afford no times to woo.  
 Madam, good night. Commend me to your daughter.

*Lady Capulet* I will, and know<sup>3</sup> her mind early tomorrow. 10  
 Tonight she's mew'd up to<sup>4</sup> her heaviness.

*Capulet* Sir Paris, I will make a desp'rate<sup>5</sup> tender<sup>6</sup>  
 Of my child's love. I think she will be ruled<sup>7</sup>  
 In all respects by me. Nay more, I doubt it not.  
 Wife, go you to her ere you go to bed. 15  
 Acquaint her here of my son<sup>8</sup> Paris' love  
 And bid her (mark you me?) on Wednesday next –  
 But, soft. What day is this?

1 fallen out = chanced to happen

2 persuade, solicit, propose

3 I will know

4 mew'd up to = shut in with her

5 somewhat reckless and unsure

6 offer

7 controlled, guided

8 son-in-law to be, which then meant "son" and was often used in advance of actual marriage



*Paris* Monday, my lord.

20 *Capulet* Monday! Ha, ha! Well, Wednesday is too soon.

Thursday let it be, a<sup>9</sup> Thursday, tell her

She shall be married to this noble earl.<sup>10</sup>

(*to Paris*) Will you be ready?<sup>11</sup> Do you like this haste?

We'll keep<sup>12</sup> no great ado,<sup>13</sup> a friend or two,

25 For hark you, Tybalt being slain so late,<sup>14</sup>

It may be thought we held him<sup>15</sup> carelessly,

Being our kinsman, if we revel much.

Therefore we'll have some half a dozen friends,

And there an end. But what say you to Thursday?

30 *Paris* My lord, I would that Thursday were tomorrow.

*Capulet* Well, get you gone. A Thursday be it then.

(*to Lady Capulet*) Go you to Juliet ere you go to bed.

Prepare her, wife, against<sup>16</sup> this wedding day.

(*to Paris*) Farewell, my lord. – (*to Servant*) Light to<sup>17</sup> my  
chamber, ho!

35 Afore me.<sup>18</sup> It is so very late that we

May call it early by and by. Good night.

EXEUNT

9 on

10 (that is, "count")

11 willing

12 observe

13 fuss

14 recently, lately

15 held him = esteemed/regarded him

16 with regard to\*

17 light to = bring light for my going to

18 (1) (if spoken to a servant): go/walk in front/in advance of me, (2) (if spoken to Paris) O my ("in my very sight/in the presence of God")

## SCENE 5

*Capulet's orchard*

ENTER ROMEO AND JULIET ALOFT, AT THE WINDOW

- Juliet* Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet near day.  
 It was the nightingale, and not the lark,  
 That pierced the fearful<sup>1</sup> hollow of thine ear.  
 Nightly she sings on yond pom'granate tree.<sup>2</sup>  
 Believe me, love, it was the nightingale. 5
- Romeo* It was the lark, the herald of the morn,  
 No nightingale. Look, love, what envious streaks  
 Do lace<sup>3</sup> the severing<sup>4</sup> clouds in yonder east.  
 Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund<sup>5</sup> day  
 Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops. 10  
 I must be gone and live, or stay and die.
- Juliet* Yond light is not daylight,<sup>6</sup> I know it, I.  
 It is some meteor<sup>7</sup> that the sun exhales  
 To be to thee this night a torchbearer<sup>8</sup>  
 And light thee on the way to Mantua. 15  
 Therefore stay yet, thou need'st not to be gone.
- Romeo* Let me be ta'en, let me be put to death.  
 I am content, so thou wilt have it so.  
 I'll say yon gray is not the morning's eye,

1 apprehensive, full of fear

2 (NIGHTLY she SINGS on YOND pomGRANate TREE)

3 embroider, thread

4 separating, parting

5 mirthful, light-hearted

6 (dayLIGHT)

7 flaring light thought to be gaseous vapors from the sun (MEETyor)

8 TORCHbearer

20 'Tis but the pale reflex<sup>9</sup> of Cynthia's brow.<sup>10</sup>  
 Nor that is not the lark whose notes do beat  
 The vaulty<sup>11</sup> heaven so high above our heads.  
 I have more care<sup>12</sup> to stay than will to go.  
 Come, death, and welcome. Juliet wills it so.  
 25 How is't, my soul?<sup>13</sup> Let's talk, it is not day.

*Juliet* It is, it is. Hie hence, be gone, away.  
 It is the lark that sings so out of tune,  
 Straining<sup>14</sup> harsh discords<sup>15</sup> and unpleasing sharps.<sup>16</sup>  
 Some say the lark makes sweet division.<sup>17</sup>  
 30 This<sup>18</sup> doth not so, for she divideth us.  
 Some say the lark and loathèd toad change<sup>19</sup> eyes.  
 O now I would they had changed voices too,  
 Since arm from arm<sup>20</sup> that voice doth us affray,<sup>21</sup>  
 Hunting thee hence with "Hunt's up"<sup>22</sup> to the day.  
 35 O now be gone, more light and light it grows.

*Romeo* More light and light, more dark and dark our woes.

ENTER NURSE

- 9 reflection
- 10 Cynthia's brow = the moon's forehead
- 11 arched like a vault
- 12 concern, solicitude, desire
- 13 my soul = Juliet
- 14 constricting its throat to produce, forcing
- 15 dissonances
- 16 shrill, high-pitched notes
- 17 melody, song (diViSiON)
- 18 this particular lark
- 19 exchanged (toads having large and lovely eyes, larks small and uninteresting eyes)
- 20 arm from arm = each other's arms
- 21 disturb, frighten
- 22 (song calling sleepers to wake and join the hunt)

*Nurse* Madam.

*Juliet* Nurse?

*Nurse* Your lady mother is coming to your chamber.

The day is broke, be wary, look about.

40

## EXIT

*Juliet* Then, window, let day in, and let life out.

*Romeo* Farewell, farewell. One kiss, and I'll descend.<sup>23</sup>

## HE GOES DOWN

*Juliet* Art thou gone so, love<sup>24</sup> lord, ay husband friend?<sup>25</sup>

I must hear from thee every day in the hour,

For in a minute there are many days.

45

O by this count I shall be much in years

Ere I again behold my Romeo.

*Romeo* Farewell.

I will omit no opportunity

That may convey my greetings, love, to thee.

50

*Juliet* O think'st thou we shall ever meet again?

*Romeo* I doubt it not, and all these woes shall serve

For sweet discourses<sup>26</sup> in our time to come.

*Juliet* O God, I have an ill-divining<sup>27</sup> soul!

Methinks I see thee, now thou art below,

55

As one dead in the bottom of a tomb.

23 (using his rope ladder)

24 (some texts follow "love" with a comma)

25 love lord = compound noun; husband friend = compound noun, though friend = lover (texts vary a great deal)

26 conversations

27 ill-divining = foreseeing evil (compound adjective)

Either my eyesight fails, or thou look'st pale.

*Romeo* And trust me, love, in my eye so do you.

Dry<sup>28</sup> sorrow drinks our blood. Adieu, adieu.

EXIT

60 *Juliet* O Fortune, Fortune! All men call thee fickle.

If thou art fickle, what dost thou with him

That is renowned for faith? Be fickle,<sup>29</sup> Fortune,<sup>30</sup>

For then I hope thou wilt not keep him long

But send him back.

*Lady Capulet* (*within*) Ho, daughter. Are you up?

65 *Juliet* Who is't that calls? It is my lady mother.

Is she not down<sup>31</sup> so late, or up so early?

What unaccustomed cause procures<sup>32</sup> her hither?

ENTER LADY CAPULET

*Lady Capulet* Why, how now, Juliet?

*Juliet* Madam, I am not well.

*Lady Capulet* Evermore weeping for your cousin's death?

70 What, wilt thou wash him from his grave with tears?

An if thou couldst,<sup>33</sup> thou couldst not make him live.

Therefore have done. Some<sup>34</sup> grief shows much of love,<sup>35</sup>

But much of grief shows still some want<sup>36</sup> of wit.

28 thirsty

29 fickle with him

30 Fortuna, a goddess

31 gone to bed

32 induces, brings, urges

33 wash him from his grave

34 a certain amount of

35 much of love = much love

36 (noun)

- Juliet* Yet let me weep for such a feeling<sup>37</sup> loss.
- Lady Capulet* So shall you feel the loss, but not the friend<sup>38</sup> 75  
Which you weep for.
- Juliet* Feeling so the loss,  
I cannot choose but ever weep the friend.<sup>39</sup>
- Lady Capulet* Well, girl, thou weep'st not so much for his death  
As that the villain lives which slaughtered him.
- Juliet* What villain, madam?
- Lady Capulet* That same villain Romeo. 80
- Juliet* (*aside*) Villain and he be many miles asunder.<sup>40</sup>  
(*to Lady Capulet*) God pardon him: I do, with all my heart,  
And yet no man like<sup>41</sup> he doth grieve my heart.
- Lady Capulet* That is because the traitor murderer lives.
- Juliet* Ay, madam, from the reach of these my hands. 85  
Would none but I might venge my cousin's death.
- Lady Capulet* We will have vengeance for it, fear thou not.  
Then weep no more. I'll send to one<sup>42</sup> in Mantua,  
Where that same banished runagate<sup>43</sup> doth live,  
Shall give him such an unaccustomed dram<sup>44</sup> 90  
That he shall soon keep Tybalt company;  
And then I hope thou wilt be satisfied.
- Juliet* Indeed I never shall be satisfied<sup>45</sup>  
With Romeo till I behold him – dead –

37 emotional, heartfelt (adjective)

38 "friend" also means "lover" (though Lady Capulet does not so intend it)

39 friend = lover (and Juliet does so intend it)

40 separated, apart

41 in the same way, as much as

42 someone, some person

43 runaway, fugitive

44 unaccustomed dram = strange potion/drink\*

45 sexually satisfied (which Lady Capulet did not mean to say)

95 Is my poor heart<sup>46</sup> so<sup>47</sup> for a kinsman vexed.<sup>48</sup>  
 Madam, if you could find out but a man  
 To bear a poison, I would temper<sup>49</sup> it,  
 That<sup>50</sup> Romeo should, upon receipt<sup>51</sup> thereof,  
 Soon sleep<sup>52</sup> in quiet.<sup>53</sup> O how my heart abhors  
 100 To hear him named and cannot<sup>54</sup> come to him,<sup>55</sup>  
 To wreak<sup>56</sup> the love I bore my cousin Tybalt  
 Upon his body<sup>57</sup> that<sup>58</sup> hath slaughtered him.

*Lady Capulet* Find thou the means, and I'll find such a man.  
 But now I'll tell thee joyful tidings, girl.

105 *Juliet* And joy comes well in such a needy time.  
 What are they, I beseech your ladyship?

46 Lady Capulet hears "till I behold [Romeo] dead." But Juliet, who is deceiving her mother all through the scene, means "till I behold [Romeo], dead is my poor heart . . ." Pausing before and after "dead" is the key.

47 thus, in that way

48 a kinsman vexed = a relative (as Romeo is to her, by marriage, though Lady Capulet does not know Juliet is married) troubled/harassed/grieved (as Romeo certainly is and as Tybalt can no longer be, since he is past all feeling)

49 (1) mix, add to (which Lady Capulet understands), (2) make it suitable/proper, reduce/modify/moderate (which Juliet in fact means)

50 so that

51 (1) ingesting (which Lady Capulet understands), (2) receiving (which Juliet means)

52 (1) die (as Lady Capulet understands), (2) sleep (as Juliet means)

53 in quiet = (1) lifeless (which Lady Capulet understands), (2) peacefully (as Juliet means)

54 and cannot = when I cannot

55 come to him = (1) get at him (which Lady Capulet understands), (2) be with him (as Juliet means)

56 (1) force (which Lady Capulet understands), (2) press (which Juliet means)

57 upon his body (1) against his body (which Lady Capulet understands), (2) with his body – that is, sexually (as Juliet means)

58 he who

- Lady Capulet* Well, well, thou hast a careful<sup>59</sup> father, child,  
 One who, to put thee from<sup>60</sup> thy heaviness,  
 Hath sorted out<sup>61</sup> a sudden<sup>62</sup> day of joy  
 That thou expects not nor I looked not for. 110
- Juliet* Madam, in happy time.<sup>63</sup> What day is that?
- Lady Capulet* Marry,<sup>64</sup> my child, early next Thursday morn  
 The gallant, young, and noble gentleman,  
 The County Paris, at Saint Peter's Church,  
 Shall happily make thee there a joyful bride. 115
- Juliet* Now by Saint Peter's Church, and Peter<sup>65</sup> too,  
 He shall not make me there a joyful bride.  
 I wonder at<sup>66</sup> this haste, that I must wed  
 Ere he<sup>67</sup> that should<sup>68</sup> be husband<sup>69</sup> comes to woo.  
 I pray you tell my lord and father, madam, 120  
 I will not marry yet, and when I do, I swear<sup>70</sup>  
 It shall be Romeo, whom you know I hate,  
 Rather than Paris. These are news indeed.
- Lady Capulet* Here comes your father. Tell him so yourself,  
 And see how he will take it at your hands. 125

59 considerate, solicitous

60 put thee from = remove/divert you from\*

61 sorted out = ordained, ordered, arranged

62 (1) unexpected, (2) speedy

63 in happy time = excellent! very good!

64 (an exclamation, not a verb: originally an ejaculatory evocation of the Virgin Mary, but by Shakespeare's time virtually devoid of its original significance)

65 by Saint Peter

66 wonder at = am surprised by

67 the man

68 ought to, must

69 my husband

70 (a hexameter line)



## ENTER CAPULET AND NURSE

*Capulet* When the sun sets the air doth drizzle dew,<sup>71</sup>  
 But for the sunset<sup>72</sup> of my brother's son  
 It rains downright.<sup>73</sup>

How now? A conduit,<sup>74</sup> girl? What, still in tears?  
 130 Evermore showering? In one little body  
 Thou counterfeit'st<sup>75</sup> a bark,<sup>76</sup> a sea, a wind:  
 For still thy eyes, which I may call the sea,  
 Do ebb and flow with tears; the bark thy body is,  
 Sailing in this salt flood; the winds, thy sighs,<sup>77</sup>  
 135 Who raging<sup>78</sup> with thy tears, and they with them,<sup>79</sup>  
 Without<sup>80</sup> a sudden calm will upset<sup>81</sup>  
 Thy tempest-tossèd<sup>82</sup> body. How now, wife?  
 Have you delivered<sup>83</sup> to her our decree?<sup>84</sup>

*Lady Capulet* Ay, sir, but she will none,<sup>85</sup> she gives you thanks.

140 I would the fool were married to her grave.

*Capulet* Soft. Take me with you,<sup>86</sup> take me with you, wife.

71 doth drizzle dew: as if weeping for the departure of the sun

72 death

73 coming down perpendicularly, out and out

74 fountain, water pipe

75 imitate, simulate

76 small-sized sailing vessel

77 the winds, thy sighs = the winds are (in Capulet's metaphor) your sighs

78 which, if they (the winds) behave wildly/violently

79 and they with them = and vice versa

80 unless there is

81 overthrow, overcome, capsize

82 hurled, disordered

83 (1) given, (2) spoken

84 decision

85 will none = wants no part of it ("wishes not at all")

86 take me with you = let me understand you

How? Will she none? Doth she not give us thanks?

Is she not proud?<sup>87</sup> Doth she not count her<sup>88</sup> blest,

Unworthy<sup>89</sup> as she is, that we have wrought<sup>90</sup>

So worthy a gentleman to be her bridegroom?

145

*Juliet* Not proud<sup>91</sup> you have, but thankful<sup>92</sup> that you have.

Proud<sup>93</sup> can I never be of what I hate,<sup>94</sup>

But thankful even for hate<sup>95</sup> that is meant<sup>96</sup> love.

*Capulet* How, how, how, how, chop logic?<sup>97</sup> What is this?

“Proud,” and “I thank you,” and “I thank you not,”

150

And yet “not proud”? Mistress minion<sup>98</sup> you,

Thank me no thankings, nor proud me no prouds,

But fettle<sup>99</sup> your fine joints<sup>100</sup> ’gainst<sup>101</sup> Thursday next

To go with Paris to Saint Peter’s Church,

Or I will drag thee on a hurdle<sup>102</sup> thither.

155

Out, you green sickness<sup>103</sup> carrion!<sup>104</sup> Out, you baggage!<sup>105</sup>

87 honored, gratified, pleased

88 herself

89 undeserving

90 produced

91 pleased

92 grateful

93 pleased

94 of what I hate = by what I am averse to

95 aversion

96 meant to be

97 hair splitter, sophist (some texts have “chopped logic”)

98 hussy, over-dainty

99 prepare, make ready

100 fine joints = perfect/elegant/delicate body (“bones”)\*

101 toward, in preparation for (“against”)

102 wooden sledge (on which criminals were conveyed to their place of execution)

103 green sickness = adolescent, immature (compound adjective)

104 carcass (nothing more than worthless flesh)

105 (1) rubbish, trash, dirt, (2) slut, whore

You tallow<sup>106</sup> face!

*Lady Capulet* (to Capulet) Fie, fie. What, are you mad?

*Juliet* Good father, I beseech you on my knees,  
Hear me with patience but to speak a word.

SHE KNEELS

160 *Capulet* Hang thee, young baggage, disobedient wretch!

I tell thee what. Get thee to church a<sup>107</sup> Thursday

Or never after look me in the face.

Speak not, reply not, do not answer me.

My fingers itch. Wife, we scarce<sup>108</sup> thought us blest

165 That God had lent us but this only child,

But now I see this one is one too much,

And that we have a curse in having her.

Out on her, hilding.<sup>109</sup>

*Nurse* God in heaven bless her.

You are to blame,<sup>110</sup> my lord, to rate<sup>111</sup> her so.

170 *Capulet* And why, my Lady Wisdom? Hold your tongue,

Good Prudence. Smatter<sup>112</sup> with your gossips, go.

*Nurse* I speak no treason.

*Capulet* O God i' god en!<sup>113</sup>

*Nurse* May not one speak?

106 wax (adjective)

107 on

108 barely, hardly ("scarcely")

109 wretch, jade, baggage

110 wrong ("to be blamed")

111 scold/reprove angrily

112 chatter, prate

113 God 'i god en = for God's sake ("may God give her a good evening" – that is, get rid of her)

- Capulet* Peace, you mumbling fool!  
Utter your gravity<sup>114</sup> o'er a gossip's bowl,<sup>115</sup>  
For here we need it not.
- Lady Capulet* You are too hot. 175
- Capulet* God's bread,<sup>116</sup> it makes me mad. Day, night, late,  
early,  
At home, abroad, alone, in company,  
Waking or sleeping, still my care<sup>117</sup> hath been  
To have her matched.<sup>118</sup> And having now provided  
A gentleman of princely parentage, 180  
Of fair demesnes,<sup>119</sup> youthful, and nobly trained,<sup>120</sup>  
Stuffed, as they say, with honorable parts,  
Proportioned<sup>121</sup> as one's thought would wish a man –  
And then to have a wretched puling<sup>122</sup> fool,  
A whining mammet,<sup>123</sup> in her fortune's tender,<sup>124</sup> 185  
To answer "I'll not wed, I cannot love,  
I am too young, I pray you pardon me!"  
But, an you will not wed, I'll pardon you.  
Graze<sup>125</sup> where you will, you shall not house<sup>126</sup> with me.

114 grave/serious/weighty remarks

115 drinking vessel

116 God's bread = consecrated wafer (an oath)

117 attention, concern

118 married

119 possessions, estates (dehMEENZ)

120 educated

121 composed (physically)

122 whining, wailing

123 doll, puppet

124 in her fortune's tender = when good fortune is offered to her

125 feed, pasture

126 dwell (verb)

190 Look to't, think on't, I do not use<sup>127</sup> jest.  
 Thursday is near, lay hand on heart,<sup>128</sup> advise.<sup>129</sup>  
 An you be mine,<sup>130</sup> I'll give you to my friend—  
 An you be not, hang!<sup>131</sup> Beg! Starve! Die in the streets!  
 For, by my soul, I'll ne'er acknowledge<sup>132</sup> thee,  
 195 Nor what<sup>133</sup> is mine shall never do thee good.  
 Trust to't. Bethink you. I'll not be forsworn.<sup>134</sup>

EXIT

*Juliet* Is there no pity sitting in the clouds  
 That sees into the bottom of my grief?  
 O sweet my mother, cast me not away.  
 200 Delay this marriage for a month, a week,  
 Or if you do not, make the bridal bed  
 In that dim monument where Tybalt lies.  
*Lady Capulet* Talk not to me, for I'll not speak a word.  
 Do as thou wilt, for I have done with thee.

EXIT

205 *Juliet* O God! O Nurse, how shall this be prevented?  
 My husband is on earth, my faith in heaven.  
 How shall that faith return again to earth

127 do not use to = am not in the habit of

128 lay hand on heart = think seriously/carefully/deeply

129 consider (verb)

130 an you be mine = if you are truly/really my daughter

131 go to the devil ("go and be hanged – so you can go where you belong, to hell")

132 show any recognition/acknowledgment of

133 what property/funds

134 be forsworn = obliged to break my word

Unless that husband send it me<sup>135</sup> from heaven  
 By leaving earth?<sup>136</sup> Comfort me, counsel me.  
 Alack, alack, that heaven should practice stratagems<sup>137</sup> 210  
 Upon so soft<sup>138</sup> a subject<sup>139</sup> as myself.  
 What say'st thou? Hast thou not a word of joy?  
 Some comfort, Nurse.

*Nurse* Faith, here it is.  
 Romeo is banished, and all the world to nothing<sup>140</sup>  
 That he dares ne'er come back to challenge<sup>141</sup> you, 215  
 Or if he do, it needs must be by stealth.  
 Then, since the case so stands as now it doth,  
 I think it best you married with the County.  
 O he's a lovely gentleman.  
 Romeo's a dishclout<sup>142</sup> to him. An eagle, madam, 220  
 Hath not so green,<sup>143</sup> so quick, so fair an eye  
 As Paris hath. Beshrew my very heart,  
 I think you are happy in this second match,  
 For it excels your first, or if it did not,  
 Your first is dead – or 'twere as good he were 225  
 As living here and you no use of<sup>144</sup> him.

*Juliet* Speak'st thou this from thy heart?

*Nurse* And from my soul too, else beshrew them both.

135 to me

136 leaving earth = dying

137 practice stratagems = play tricks, work schemes

138 quiet, mild, docile

139 person

140 all the world to nothing = the chances are a million to one

141 find fault with, accuse

142 dish cloth

143 (hazel-green eyes were considered handsome)

144 use of = profit from (especially sexual profit)

*Juliet* Amen.

230 *Nurse* What?

*Juliet* Well, thou hast comforted me marvelous much.

Go in, and tell my lady I am gone,  
Having displeased my father, to Laurence cell,  
To make confession and to be absolved.

235 *Nurse* Marry, I will, and this is wisely done.

EXIT

*Juliet* Ancient damnation!<sup>145</sup> O most wicked fiend,

Is it more sin to wish me thus forsworn,<sup>146</sup>

Or to dispraise my lord with that same tongue

Which she hath praised him with<sup>147</sup> above compare<sup>148</sup>

240 So many thousand times? Go, counselor.

Thou and my bosom henceforth shall be twain.<sup>149</sup>

I'll<sup>150</sup> to the friar to know his remedy.<sup>151</sup>

If all else fail, myself have power to die.

EXIT

145 ancient damnation! = damned old devil!

146 perjured

147 which she hath praised him with = with which she has praised him

148 above compare = beyond comparison

149 parted, separated, estranged

150 I'll go

151 help, relief\*

# Act 4



## SCENE I

*Friar Laurence's cell*

ENTER FRIAR LAURENCE AND COUNTY PARIS

*Friar* On Thursday, sir? The time is very short.

*Paris* My father Capulet will have it so,  
And I am nothing slow<sup>1</sup> to slack<sup>2</sup> his haste.

*Friar* You say you do not know the lady's mind.  
Uneven<sup>3</sup> is the course.<sup>4</sup> I like it not.

*Paris* Immoderately she weeps for Tybalt's death,  
And therefore have I little talked of love,  
For Venus smiles not in a house<sup>5</sup> of tears.  
Now sir, her father counts it dangerous<sup>6</sup>

5

1 I am nothing slow = I myself am not at all/in no way inclined

2 to slack = making less active/vigorous

3 irregular

4 path

5 (not a human place of dwelling but an astrological position)

6 hurtful, injurious



10 That she do give her sorrow so much sway,<sup>7</sup>  
 And in his wisdom hastes<sup>8</sup> our marriage<sup>9</sup>  
 To stop the inundation<sup>10</sup> of her tears,  
 Which, too much minded<sup>11</sup> by herself alone,<sup>12</sup>  
 May be put from her by society.<sup>13</sup>

15 Now do you know the reason of this haste.

*Friar (aside)* I would I knew not why it should<sup>14</sup> be slowed. —  
 Look, sir, here comes the lady toward my cell.

## ENTER JULIET

*Paris* Happily met, my lady and my wife.

*Juliet* That may be, sir, when I may be a wife.

20 *Paris* That may be, must be, love, on Thursday next.

*Juliet* What must be shall be.

*Friar* That's a certain<sup>15</sup> text.

*Paris* Come you to make confession to this father?

*Juliet* To answer that, I should confess to you.

*Paris* Do not deny to him that you love me.

25 *Juliet* I will confess to you that I love him.

*Paris* So will ye,<sup>16</sup> I am sure, that you love me.

*Juliet* If I do so, it will be of more price,<sup>17</sup>

7 influence, power of command

8 (verb)

9 (MARIAGE)

10 overflowing, flooding, superfluous abundance

11 thought of, focused on

12 when alone

13 companionship

14 ought

15 fixed, settled

16 so will ye = so too will you confess to him

17 value, worth

Being spoke behind your back, than to your face.

*Paris* Poor soul, thy face is much abused<sup>18</sup> with tears.

*Juliet* The tears have got small victory by that, 30

For it was bad enough before their spite.<sup>19</sup>

*Paris* Thou wrong'st it more than tears with that report.<sup>20</sup>

*Juliet* That is no slander, sir, which is a truth,

And what I spake, I spake it to my face.<sup>21</sup>

*Paris* Thy face is mine, and thou hast slandered it. 35

*Juliet* It may be so, for it is not mine own.<sup>22</sup>

Are you at leisure, holy father, now,

Or shall I come to you at evening mass?

*Friar* My leisure serves me,<sup>23</sup> pensive<sup>24</sup> daughter, now.

(to *Paris*) My lord, we must entreat<sup>25</sup> the time alone. 40

*Paris* God shield<sup>26</sup> I should disturb<sup>27</sup> devotion.

Juliet, on Thursday early will I rouse ye.

Till then, adieu, and keep this holy kiss.

## EXIT

*Juliet* O, shut the door, and when thou hast done so

Come weep with me – past hope, past cure, past help! 45

*Friar* Ah, Juliet, I already know thy grief.

18 misused, worn out

19 injury, harm

20 statement

21 (pun on saying thing's to a person's face and, here, literally saying it to a face – her face)

22 (that is, it belongs to the man who is already her husband, Romeo)

23 serves me = is my servant/helper (“obeys me”)

24 (1) thoughtful, serious, (2) anxious, apprehensive

25 ask for

26 prevent

27 trouble, interfere with

It strains<sup>28</sup> me past the compass<sup>29</sup> of my wits.

I hear thou must – and nothing may prorogue<sup>30</sup> it –

On Thursday next be married to this County.

50 *Juliet* Tell me not, friar, that thou hear'st of this,

Unless thou tell me how I may prevent it.

If in thy wisdom thou canst give no help,

Do thou but call my resolution<sup>31</sup> wise

And with this knife I'll help<sup>32</sup> it presently.<sup>33</sup>

55 God joined my heart and Romeo's, thou<sup>34</sup> our hands,

And ere this hand, by thee to Romeo's sealed,<sup>35</sup>

Shall be the label<sup>36</sup> to another deed,<sup>37</sup>

Or my true heart with treacherous revolt<sup>38</sup>

Turn to another, this shall slay them both.<sup>39</sup>

60 Therefore, out of thy long experienced time,<sup>40</sup>

Give me some present<sup>41</sup> counsel, or behold,

'Twixt my extremes<sup>42</sup> and me this bloody knife

Shall play the umpire, arbitrating<sup>43</sup> that

28 distresses, afflicts, presses hard upon

29 limits, bounds

30 delay, postpone

31 solution, answer

32 do what is needed, bring it to pass

33 speedily, without delay, right now\*

34 you joined

35 fastened, tied

36 ribbon to which a documentary seal is attached

37 (1) action, (2) written document of a legal nature

38 rebellion

39 hand and heart

40 years, life

41 quick, immediate, instant\*

42 'twixt my extremes = between my utterly opposed/harsh/severe/  
intolerable circumstances

43 deciding, determining

- Which<sup>44</sup> the commission<sup>45</sup> of thy years and art  
 Could to no issue<sup>46</sup> of true honor bring. 65  
 Be not so long to speak. I long to die  
 If what thou speak'st speak not of remedy.
- Friar* Hold, daughter. I do spy a kind of hope,  
 Which craves as desperate an execution<sup>47</sup>  
 As that is desperate which we would prevent. 70  
 If, rather than to marry County Paris  
 Thou hast the strength of will to slay thyself,  
 Then is it likely thou wilt undertake  
 A thing like death to chide<sup>48</sup> away this shame,  
 That cop'st<sup>49</sup> with death himself to scape from it. 75  
 And if thou dar'st, I'll give thee remedy.
- Juliet* O bid me leap, rather than marry Paris,  
 From off the battlements<sup>50</sup> of yonder tower,  
 Or walk in thievish ways,<sup>51</sup> or bid me lurk<sup>52</sup>  
 Where serpents are. Chain me with roaring bears, 80  
 Or shut me nightly in a charnel house,<sup>53</sup>  
 O'ercovered quite<sup>54</sup> with dead men's rattling bones,

44 that which = what

45 authority

46 end, termination, way out, exit

47 carrying into effect, fulfillment (which CRAVES as DESprit an EXeCUtiON)

48 drive

49 (1) barter, bargain, (2) encounter, face

50 tops of the walls

51 thievish ways = (1) dishonest paths, (2) paths/roads where thieves congregate

52 live, hide

53 charnel house = funeral parlor

54 completely

With reeky shanks<sup>55</sup> and yellow chapless<sup>56</sup> skulls,  
 Or bid me go into a new-made grave  
 85 And hide me with a dead man in his shroud –  
 Things that, to hear<sup>57</sup> them told, have made me tremble –  
 And I will do it without fear or doubt,  
 To live an unstained<sup>58</sup> wife to my sweet love.

*Friar* Hold,<sup>59</sup> then. Go home, be merry, give consent  
 90 To marry Paris. Wednesday is tomorrow.  
 Tomorrow night look that thou lie alone.  
 Let not the Nurse lie with thee in thy chamber.  
 Take thou this vial,<sup>60</sup> being then<sup>61</sup> in bed,  
 And this distilling<sup>62</sup> liquor drink thou off,  
 95 When presently through all thy veins shall run  
 A cold and drowsy humor,<sup>63</sup> for no pulse  
 Shall keep his native progress,<sup>64</sup> but surcease,<sup>65</sup>  
 No warmth, no breath, shall testify thou livest,  
 The roses in thy lips and cheeks shall fade  
 100 To wanny ashes,<sup>66</sup> thy eyes' windows<sup>67</sup> fall

55 reeky shanks = blackened leg bones

56 jawless

57 to hear = even/just to hear

58 spotless, pure, unblemished, untarnished

59 continue, stay as you are, carry on

60 small glass bottle

61 being then = when you are

62 concentrated, purified

63 state of being (“humors” concerned both matters physiological *and* psychological)

64 native progress = natural march/onward movement

65 stop

66 wanny ashes = pale as ashes (some texts have “wany,” or “paly,” or “many,” or “mealy”)

67 eyes' windows = eyelids

Like death when he shuts up<sup>68</sup> the day<sup>69</sup> of life.  
 Each part, deprived of supple government,<sup>70</sup>  
 Shall stiff and stark<sup>71</sup> and cold appear, like death,  
 And in this borrowed likeness of shrunk<sup>72</sup> death  
 Thou shalt continue two and forty hours 105  
 And then awake as from a pleasant sleep.  
 Now when the bridegroom in the morning comes  
 To rouse thee from thy bed, there art thou dead.  
 Then as the manner of our country is,  
 In thy best robes, uncovered on the bier, 110  
 Thou shalt be borne to that same ancient vault<sup>73</sup>  
 Where all the kindred of the Capulets lie.  
 In the meantime, against thou shalt awake,  
 Shall Romeo by my letters know our drift,  
 And hither shall he come, and he and I 115  
 Will watch thy waking, and that very night  
 Shall Romeo bear thee hence to Mantua.  
 And this shall free thee from this present shame,  
 If no inconstant toy<sup>74</sup> nor womanish fear  
 Abate<sup>75</sup> thy valor in the acting it. 120  
*Juliet* Give me,<sup>76</sup> give me! O tell not me of fear.

68 shuts up = closes

69 light ("daylight")

70 supple government = control/management of the flexibility of body and limbs

71 hard, rigid

72 contracted, shrunken

73 burial chamber

74 inconstant toy = fickle/changeable whim/foolish fancy

75 (1) destroy, demolish, (2) beat back, diminish, reduce

76 give me = give it to me

*Friar* Hold. Get you gone, be strong and prosperous<sup>77</sup>

In this resolve.<sup>78</sup> I'll send a friar with speed

To Mantua, with my letters to thy lord.

125 *Juliet* Love give me strength, and strength shall help afford.<sup>79</sup>

Farewell, dear father.

EXEUNT

77 successful

78 (1) decision, solution, (2) firmness of purpose

79 help afford = afford (give, furnish) help

## SCENE 2

*Capulet's house*

ENTER CAPULET, LADY CAPULET, NURSE,  
AND TWO OR THREE SERVINGMEN

*Capulet* (to *Servingman*) So many guests invite as here are writ.

EXIT SERVINGMAN

Sirrah, go hire me twenty cunning<sup>1</sup> cooks.

*Servingman 2* You shall have none ill,<sup>2</sup> sir, for I'll try<sup>3</sup> if they can lick their fingers. 5

*Capulet* How canst thou try them so?

*Servingman 2* Marry, sir, 'tis an ill cook that cannot lick his own fingers.<sup>4</sup> Therefore he that cannot lick his fingers goes not<sup>5</sup> with me.

*Capulet* Go, begone.<sup>6</sup> 10

EXIT SERVINGMAN 2

We shall be much unfurnished<sup>7</sup> for this time.

What, is my daughter gone to Friar Laurence?

*Nurse* Ay, forsooth.

*Capulet* Well, he may chance to do some good on<sup>8</sup> her.

1 skillful, expert

2 of inferior quality

3 test

4 (because a bad cook knows the food does not taste good)

5 goes not = (1) does not travel/join, (2) won't be successful

6 leave

7 unprepared

8 to



15 A peevish<sup>9</sup> self-willed harlotry<sup>10</sup> it is.

ENTER JULIET

*Nurse* See where she comes from shrift with merry look.

*Capulet* How now, my headstrong?<sup>11</sup> Where have you been gadding?<sup>12</sup>

*Juliet* Where I have learnt me to repent the sin  
Of disobedient opposition<sup>13</sup>

20 To you and your behests,<sup>14</sup> and am enjoined<sup>15</sup>

By holy Laurence to fall prostrate here

To beg your pardon. (*she kneels*) Pardon, I beseech you.

Henceforward I am ever ruled by you.

*Capulet* Send for the County. Go tell him of this.

25 I'll have this knot<sup>16</sup> knit up tomorrow morning.

*Juliet* I met the youthful lord at Laurence cell  
And gave him what becoming love<sup>17</sup> I might,  
Not stepping o'er the bounds of modesty.

*Capulet* Why, I am glad on't. This is well. Stand up.

30 This is as't should be. Let me see the County.

Ay, marry, go, I say, and fetch him hither.

Now, afore God, this reverend holy friar,

All our whole city is much bound<sup>18</sup> to him.

9 silly, foolish

10 obscene behavior/talk

11 willful/stubborn one

12 wandering

13 (of DISobEEDyent OPoSitiON)

14 commands

15 directed, instructed

16 union, tie ("marriage")

17 becoming love = suitable/proper reverence/affection

18 obliged, grateful

*Juliet* Nurse, will you go with me into my closet  
 To help me sort<sup>19</sup> such needful ornaments<sup>20</sup> 35  
 As you think fit to furnish me<sup>21</sup> tomorrow?  
*Lady Capulet* No, not till Thursday. There is time enough.  
*Capulet* Go, Nurse, go with her. We'll to church tomorrow.

## EXEUNT JULIET AND NURSE

*Lady Capulet* We shall be short in our provision.<sup>22</sup>  
 'Tis now near night.  
*Capulet* Tush, I will stir about,<sup>23</sup> 40  
 And all things shall be well, I warrant thee, wife.  
 Go thou to Juliet, help to deck up<sup>24</sup> her.  
 I'll not to bed tonight, let me alone.  
 I'll play the housewife for this once. (*calls for servants*) What,  
 ho!  
 (*to Lady Capulet*) They are all forth.<sup>25</sup> Well, I will walk myself 45  
 To County Paris, to prepare him up  
 Against<sup>26</sup> tomorrow. My heart is wondrous light,  
 Since this same wayward<sup>27</sup> girl is so reclaimed.<sup>28</sup>

## EXEUNT

19 choose, decide on

20 attire, trappings (clothing of a decorative nature)

21 furnish me = provide for myself

22 household arrangements/supplies

23 stir about = busy myself

24 deck up = clothe/adorn/outfit

25 out, away

26 prepare him up against = ready him for

27 disobedient, wrongheaded, self-willed, stubborn

28 brought/called back, reformed

## SCENE 3

*Juliet's chamber*

ENTER JULIET AND NURSE

*Juliet*            Ay, those attires<sup>1</sup> are best. But, gentle Nurse,  
 I pray thee leave me to myself tonight,  
 For I have need of many orisons<sup>2</sup>  
 To move the heavens to smile upon my state,<sup>3</sup>  
 5        Which, well thou knowest, is cross<sup>4</sup> and full of sin.

ENTER LADY CAPULET

*Lady Capulet*    What, are you busy, ho? Need you my help?

*Juliet*            No, madam. We have culled<sup>5</sup> such necessities  
 As are behoveful<sup>6</sup> for our state tomorrow.  
 So please you, let me now be left alone,  
 10        And let the Nurse this night sit up with you,  
 For I am sure you have your hands full all<sup>7</sup>  
 In this so sudden business.

*Lady Capulet*                            Good night.  
 Get thee to bed, and rest, for thou hast need.

EXEUNT MOTHER AND NURSE

*Juliet*            Farewell. God knows when we shall meet again.

1 dresses

2 prayers

3 condition (state of mind)

4 unfavorable

5 chosen, gathered, picked\*

6 useful, proper

7 (1) all = completely, (2) all of you ("you all have your hands full")

I have a faint<sup>8</sup> cold fear thrills<sup>9</sup> through my veins 15  
 That almost freezes up the heat of life.  
 I'll call them back again to comfort me.  
 Nurse! – What should she do here?  
 My dismal scene<sup>10</sup> I needs must act alone.  
 Come, vial. 20  
 What if this mixture do not work at all?  
 Shall I be married then tomorrow morning?  
 No, no! This shall forbid<sup>11</sup> it. (*speaks to her dagger*) Lie thou  
 there.

## LAYS DAGGER DOWN

What if it be a poison which the friar  
 Subtly<sup>12</sup> hath ministered<sup>13</sup> to have me dead, 25  
 Lest in this marriage he should be dishonored  
 Because he married me before to Romeo?  
 I fear it is. And yet methinks it should not,<sup>14</sup>  
 For he hath still been tried<sup>15</sup> a holy man.  
 I will not entertain<sup>16</sup> so bad a thought. 30  
 How if, when I am laid into the tomb,  
 I wake before the time that Romeo  
 Come to redeem<sup>17</sup> me? There's a fearful point.

8 (1) sickly, (2) cowardly

9 trickling

10 dismal scene = sinister/terrible/miserable activity/episode

11 stop it, make it impossible

12 (1) cleverly, artfully, (2) treacherously

13 furnished, supplied

14 should not = should not be

15 still been tried = always been proven

16 admit, consider

17 free, recover

Shall I not then be stifled in the vault,  
 35 To whose foul mouth no healthsome air breathes in,  
 And there die strangled ere my Romeo comes?  
 Or, if I live, is it not very like<sup>18</sup>  
 The horrible conceit of death and night,  
 Together with the terror of the place,  
 40 As in<sup>19</sup> a vault, an ancient receptacle<sup>20</sup>  
 Where for this many hundred years the bones  
 Of all my buried ancestors are packed<sup>21</sup> –  
 Where bloody Tybalt, yet but green in earth,<sup>22</sup>  
 Lies fest'ring<sup>23</sup> in his shroud – where, as they say,  
 45 At some hours in the night spirits resort.<sup>24</sup>  
 Alack, alack, is it not like that I,  
 So early waking, what with loathsome smells,  
 And shrieks like mandrakes<sup>25</sup> torn out of the earth,  
 That living mortals, hearing them, run mad –  
 50 O if I wake, shall I not be distraught,  
 Environèd with<sup>26</sup> all these hideous fears,  
 And madly play with my forefathers' joints,<sup>27</sup>  
 And pluck<sup>28</sup> the mangled<sup>29</sup> Tybalt from his shroud,

18 likely, probable

19 as in = since I will be in

20 repository

21 pressed together in a mass, stuffed, crammed

22 green in earth = newly buried

23 rotting

24 come

25 mandragora: a split-rooted, humanlike plant that was thought, when pulled up, to give a maddening shriek

26 environèd with = beset by

27 (MY foreFATHER's JOINTS)

28 pull, remove, drag

29 mutilated

And, in this rage,<sup>30</sup> with some great kinsman's bone  
 As with a club dash out my desp'rate brains? 55  
 O look, methinks I see my cousin's ghost  
 Seeking out Romeo, that<sup>31</sup> did spit<sup>32</sup> his body  
 Upon a rapier's point. Stay, Tybalt, stay!  
 Romeo, Romeo, Romeo, here's drink! I drink to thee.<sup>33</sup>

SHE DRINKS AND FALLS UPON HER BED

30 madness, fit

31 who

32 thrust through, pierce (to out on a spit)

33 (ROmeo ROmeo ROmeo here's DRINK i DRINK to THEE)

SCENE 4  
*Capulet's house*

ENTER LADY CAPULET AND NURSE

*Lady Capulet* Hold,<sup>1</sup> take these keys and fetch more spices,  
Nurse.

*Nurse* They call for dates and quinces in the pastry.<sup>2</sup>

ENTER CAPULET

*Capulet* Come, stir, stir, stir!<sup>3</sup> The second cock hath  
crowed,  
The curfew bell hath rung, 'tis three o'clock.  
5 Look to the baked meats,<sup>4</sup> good Angelica.<sup>5</sup>  
Spare not<sup>6</sup> for cost.

*Nurse* Go, you cot queen,<sup>7</sup> go,  
Get you to bed. Faith, you'll be sick tomorrow  
For<sup>8</sup> this night's watching.

*Capulet* No, not a whit.<sup>9</sup> What, I have watched ere now  
10 All night for lesser cause,<sup>10</sup> and ne'er been sick.

*Lady Capulet* Ay, you have been a mouse hunt<sup>11</sup> in your time,

1 here

2 in the pastry kitchen (possibly, but less likely, in the pastries themselves)

3 move, keep busy

4 baked meats = meat pies ("pastries")

5 the Nurse's name

6 spare not = don't hold back

7 cot queen = a man meddling in women's business

8 on account/because of

9 least little bit

10 motive, reason, purpose

11 mouse hunt = night prowler (like a cat, a hunter of mice; a woman, in slang, was a "mouse")

But I will watch you from<sup>12</sup> such watching now.

EXEUNT LADY CAPULET AND NURSE

*Capulet* A jealous hood,<sup>13</sup> a jealous hood!

ENTER THREE OR FOUR SERVINGMEN, WITH SPITS,<sup>14</sup>  
LOGS, AND BASKETS

Now, fellow, what is there?

*Servingman 1* Things for the cook, sir, but I know not what. 15

*Capulet* Make haste, make haste.

EXIT SERVINGMAN 1

(to *Servingman 2*) Sirrah,

fetch drier logs.

Call Peter, he will show thee where they are.

*Servingman 2* I have a head, sir, that will find out logs

And never trouble Peter for<sup>15</sup> the matter.

*Capulet* Mass,<sup>16</sup> and well said. A merry whoreson,<sup>17</sup> ha. 20

Thou shalt be loggerhead.<sup>18</sup>

EXIT SERVINGMAN 2

Good faith, 'tis day.

The County will be here with music,<sup>19</sup> straight,

12 watch you from = be alert/on guard to keep you from

13 (exact meaning uncertain, but the general sense seems clear: "you're jealous of my former exploits!")

14 sharp rods, metal or wood, to be pierced through meat for roasting over a fire  
15 about

16 by the Mass (exclamation)

17 slangy praise ("a merry s.o.b.")

18 blockhead: a bad pun on "using his head" and being the "head" of the hunt  
for "logs"

19 musicians



For so he said he would.

MUSIC

I hear him near.

Nurse! Wife! What, ho! What, Nurse, I say!<sup>20</sup>

ENTER NURSE

- 25 Go waken Juliet, go and trim<sup>21</sup> her up.  
I'll go and chat with Paris. Hie, make haste,  
Make haste! The bridegroom he is come already:  
Make haste, I say.

EXEUNT

20 (NURSE WIFE what HO what NURSE i SAY)

21 (1) dress, (2) support, comfort, (3) strengthen, (4) get ready

SCENE 5  
*Juliet's chamber*

ENTER NURSE

*Nurse* Mistress! What, mistress! Juliet! Fast,<sup>1</sup> I warrant her, she.  
 Why, lamb, why, lady! Fie, you slug-abed!  
 Why, love, I say! Madam! Sweetheart! Why, bride!  
 What, not a word? You take your pennyworths<sup>2</sup> now.  
 Sleep for a week – for<sup>3</sup> the next night, I warrant, 5  
 The County Paris hath set up his rest<sup>4</sup>  
 That you shall rest but little. God forgive me!<sup>5</sup>  
 Marry, and amen. How sound is she asleep!  
 I needs must wake her. Madam, madam, madam!  
 Ay, let the County take you<sup>6</sup> in your bed, 10  
 He'll fright you up, i' faith. Will it not be?<sup>7</sup>

SHE DRAWS BED CURTAINS ASIDE

What, dressed, and in your clothes, and down<sup>8</sup> again?  
 I must needs wake you. Lady! Lady! Lady!  
 Alas, alas! Help, help! My lady's dead!  
 O weraday that ever I was born! 15

1 fast asleep

2 small bits of sleep

3 because

4 set up his rest = resolved/determined (based on usages from card playing)

5 (for her bawdiness)

6 take you = catch/find (with the added meaning of "take" as sexual possession)

7 will it not be? = (1) isn't that the way it will be? or (2) won't you ever wake up?

8 lying down

Some *aqua vitae*, ho! My lord! My lady!

ENTER LADY CAPULET

*Lady Capulet* What noise<sup>9</sup> is here?

*Nurse* O lamentable<sup>10</sup> day!

*Lady Capulet* What is the matter?

*Nurse* Look, look! O heavy<sup>11</sup> day!

*Lady Capulet* O me, O me! My child, my only life!

20 *Revive,*<sup>12</sup> *look up,*<sup>13</sup> *or I will die with thee!*

*Help, help! Call help!*

ENTER CAPULET

*Capulet* For shame, bring Juliet forth, her lord is come.

*Nurse* She's dead, deceased.<sup>14</sup> She's dead! Alack the day!

*Lady Capulet* Alack the day, she's dead, she's dead, she's dead!

25 *Capulet* Ha! let me see her. Out alas.<sup>15</sup> She's cold,

Her blood is settled<sup>16</sup> and her joints are stiff.

Life and these lips have long been separated.

Death lies on her like an untimely frost

Upon the sweetest flower of all the field.

*Nurse* O lamentable day!

30 *Lady Capulet* O woeful time!

*Capulet* Death, that hath ta'en her hence to make me wail,

9 shouting, loud cries

10 (L)Amen(T)Able

11 grievous, distressful

12 (1) return to consciousness, (2) return to life

13 look up = open your eyes

14 (not then an uncommon word in ordinary vocabularies, "deceased" carried the sense of "recently" dead)

15 out alas = exclamation of lamentation

16 stagnant, coagulated, not flowing

Ties up my tongue and will not let me speak.

ENTER FRIAR LAURENCE AND THE COUNTY PARIS,  
WITH MUSICIANS

- Friar* Come, is the bride ready to go to church?
- Capulet* Ready to go, but never to return.  
(to Paris) O son, the night before thy wedding day 35  
Hath Death<sup>17</sup> lain with thy wife. See, there she lies,  
Flower as she was, deflowered<sup>18</sup> by him.  
Death is my son in law, Death is my heir.  
My daughter he hath wedded. I will die  
And leave him all. Life – living – all is Death's. 40
- Paris* Have I thought long to see<sup>19</sup> this morning's  
face,<sup>20</sup>  
And doth it give me<sup>21</sup> such a sight as this?
- Lady Capulet* Accursed, unhappy, wretched, hateful day!  
Most miserable hour that e'er time saw  
In lasting labor<sup>22</sup> of his pilgrimage!<sup>23</sup> 45  
But one, poor one, one poor and loving child,  
But one thing to rejoice and solace in,  
And cruel Death hath caught<sup>24</sup> it from my sight!
- Nurse* O woe! O woeful, woeful, woeful day!  
Most lamentable day, most woeful day 50

17 Death: masculine, in English (though feminine in most European languages)

18 her virginity taken

19 thought long = yearned, waited wearily/impatiently

20 morning's face = dawn

21 give me = bestow on me, put before me

22 lasting labor = enduring/permanent/long-continuing work/task/exertion

23 long journey

24 driven, chased

That ever, ever I did yet behold!

O day, O day, O day! O hateful day!

Never was seen so black a day as this.

O woeful day! O woeful day.

55 *Paris* Beguiled,<sup>25</sup> divorcèd,<sup>26</sup> wrongèd, spited,<sup>27</sup> slain.<sup>28</sup>

Most detestable<sup>29</sup> Death, by thee beguiled,

By cruel,<sup>30</sup> cruel thee quite overthrown.<sup>31</sup>

O love! O life not life, but love in death!

*Capulet* Despised,<sup>32</sup> distressèd,<sup>33</sup> hated, martyred, killed.

60 Uncomfortable<sup>34</sup> time, why cam'st thou now

To murder,<sup>35</sup> murder our solemnity?<sup>36</sup>

O child, O child! My soul, and not my child,

Dead art thou. Alack, my child is dead,

And with my child my joys are burièd.

65 *Friar* Peace, ho, for shame! Confusion's cure<sup>37</sup> lives not

In these confusions.<sup>38</sup> Heaven and yourself

Had part<sup>39</sup> in this fair maid. Now heaven hath all,

And all the better is it for the maid.

25 deceived, cheated

26 a marriage cut/broken off

27 treated maliciously

28 slaughtered

29 (DEETesTABLE)

30 (bisyllabic)

31 vanquished

32 unvalued, treated with contempt/scorn

33 afflicted, exhausted, crushed

34 unconsoling, empty of comfort (unCOMforTABLE)

35 kill with premeditated/deliberate malice

36 specially important/observed ritual occasion

37 confusion's cure = the remedy for destruction/ruin

38 agitated/fluttering disorderly displays

39 a share (parents create the body; God creates – and then takes back – the soul)

Your part in her you could not keep from death,  
 But heaven keeps his part in eternal life. 70  
 The most you sought was her promotion,<sup>40</sup>  
 For 'twas your heaven<sup>41</sup> she should be advanced –  
 And weep ye now, seeing she is advanced  
 Above the clouds, as high as heaven itself?  
 O in this<sup>42</sup> love, you love your child so ill<sup>43</sup> 75  
 That you run mad, seeing that she is well.<sup>44</sup>  
 She's not well married that lives married long,  
 But she's best married that dies married young.<sup>45</sup>  
 Dry up your tears and stick your rosemary<sup>46</sup>  
 On this fair corse, and, as the custom is, 80  
 In all her best array bear her to church.  
 For though fond<sup>47</sup> nature bids us all lament,  
 Yet nature's tears are reason's<sup>48</sup> merriment.  
*Capulet* All things that we ordainèd<sup>49</sup> festival  
 Turn from their office<sup>50</sup> to black funeral, 85  
 Our instruments<sup>51</sup> to melancholy bells,<sup>52</sup>

40 elevation/advance/progression to a higher rank (from “maid” to “wife”)  
 (proMOtiON)

41 (their heaven, but not God's, the only true heaven)

42 this kind of

43 wrongfully, sinfully, wickedly

44 fortunate, happy (with a pun on “well” as “not sick in body”)

45 (again, Juliet is considered already married to Paris: the wedding solemnizes  
 the prior fact)

46 evergreen leaves, signifying remembrance (ROSEmaRY)

47 insipidly/foolishly tender/loving

48 reason = the ordered/logical/reasonable/believable teaching of religion

49 prepared, arranged, made ready

50 duty, employment, obligation\*

51 (of celebratory music making)

52 (funeral church bells)

Our wedding cheer<sup>53</sup> to a sad burial feast,  
 Our solemn hymns<sup>54</sup> to sullen<sup>55</sup> dirges<sup>56</sup> change,  
 Our bridal flowers serve for a buried corse,  
 90 And all things change them<sup>57</sup> to the contrary.

*Friar* Sir, go you in, and madam, go with him,  
 And go, Sir Paris. Everyone prepare  
 To follow this fair corse unto her grave.  
 The heavens do low'r<sup>58</sup> upon you for some ill:<sup>59</sup>  
 95 Move them no more by crossing<sup>60</sup> their high will.

EXEUNT ALL BUT MUSICIANS AND NURSE

*Musician 1* Faith, we may put up our pipes and be gone.

*Nurse* Honest good fellows, ah, put up, put up!  
 For well you know this is a pitiful case.<sup>61</sup>

EXIT NURSE

*Musician 1* Ay, by my troth, the case<sup>62</sup> may be amended.<sup>63</sup>

ENTER PETER

100 *Peter* Musicians, O, musicians, "Heart's ease,"<sup>64</sup> "Heart's

53 mirth, joy

54 (in praise)

55 gloomy, dismal, melancholy

56 (prayers/rituals in memoriam)

57 themselves

58 frown, scowl (spelled "lour" or "lower")

59 morally wrong action/conduct

60 thwarting, opposing

61 situation

62 the case in which his musical instrument is carried

63 improved, repaired

64 popular song, the words to which are lost; an earlier poem, "Death the Port of Peace," supplies the customary message: "Here is the rest of all your

ease"! O an you will have me live, play "Heart's ease."

*Musician 1* Why "Heart's ease"?

*Peter* O, musicians, because my heart itself plays "My heart is full of woe." O, play me some merry dump<sup>65</sup> to comfort me. 105

*Musician 1* Not a dump we! 'Tis no time to play now.

*Peter* You will not then?

*Musician 1* No.

*Peter* I will then give it you soundly.<sup>66</sup>

*Musician 1* What will you give us? 110

*Peter* No money, on my faith, but the gleeck.<sup>67</sup> I will give you the minstrel.<sup>68</sup>

*Musician 1* Then will I give you the serving creature.

*Peter* Then will I lay<sup>69</sup> the serving creature's dagger on your pate.<sup>70</sup> I will carry no crotchets.<sup>71</sup> I'll *re*<sup>72</sup> you, I'll *fa* 115  
you. Do you note<sup>73</sup> me?

*Musician 1* An you *re* us and *fa* us, you note us.<sup>74</sup>

*Musician 2* Pray you put up your dagger, and put out<sup>75</sup> your wit.

busyness, / Here is the port of peace and restfulness" (normalized from *Religious Lyrics of the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Carleton Brown [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939], 259)

65 tune, melody

66 thoroughly, properly, to the full (with a pun on "soundly" as by means of "sounds")

67 jest, mockery

68 buffoon, clown

69 bring/beat down, deposit, apply

70 head

71 carry no crotchets = endure no (1) perverse/cranky whims, (2) musical notes (as one "carries" a tune)

72 (*do, re, me, fa, so* = Italian words for the notes of the musical scale)

73 (1) mark, pay attention to, (2) set musical notes to words, (3) play music

74 note us = (1) put musical notes on us, (2) pay close attention to us

75 put/give forth, utter, show



*Peter* Then have at you with my wit. I will dry beat you  
 120 with an iron wit, and put up<sup>76</sup> my iron dagger. Answer me  
 like men:

“When griping<sup>77</sup> grief the heart doth wound,  
 And doleful dumps<sup>78</sup> the mind oppress,  
 Then music with her silver sound” – <sup>79</sup>

125 Why “silver sound”? Why “music with her silver sound”?  
 What say you, Simon Catling?<sup>80</sup>

*Musician 1* Marry, sir, because silver hath a sweet sound.

*Peter* Pretty.<sup>81</sup> What say you, Hugh Rebeck?<sup>82</sup>

*Musician 2* I say “silver sound” because musicians sound<sup>83</sup> for  
 130 silver.

*Peter* Pretty too. What say you, James Soundpost?<sup>84</sup>

*Musician 3* Faith, I know not what to say.

*Peter* O I cry you mercy.<sup>85</sup> You are the singer.<sup>86</sup> I will say<sup>87</sup>  
 for you. It is “music with her silver sound” because musicians  
 135 have no gold for sounding:<sup>88</sup>

76 put up = sheathe

77 painful, distressing

78 low/heavy spirits, fits of melancholy / depression

79 Richard Edwards (1523?–1566), “A Song to the Lute in Musicke,” in Percy,  
*Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, 1:187–89

80 catling = cat gut for the strings of musical instruments

81 clever, ingenious

82 early form of the fiddle

83 make sounds, play music

84 wooden peg beneath the bridge of violins, etc., connecting the instrument's  
 back and belly

85 I cry you mercy = I beg your pardon (here ironic)

86 (all you can do is sing / play music)

87 speak (which you as a “singer” plainly cannot be expected to do)

88 jingling in their purses

“Then music with her silver sound  
With speedy help doth lend redress.”

EXIT PETER

*Musician 1* What a pestilent<sup>89</sup> knave is this same.<sup>90</sup>

*Musician 2* Hang him, Jack. Come, we'll in here, tarry<sup>91</sup> for the  
mourners, and stay<sup>92</sup> dinner.

140

EXEUNT

89 annoying, troublesome

90 same/identical man

91 delay, linger, wait for

92 stay to

# Act 5



## SCENE I

*Mantua. A street*

ENTER ROMEO

*Romeo* If I may trust the flattering<sup>1</sup> truth of sleep  
My dreams presage<sup>2</sup> some joyful news at hand.<sup>3</sup>  
My bosom's lord<sup>4</sup> sits lightly<sup>5</sup> in his throne,<sup>6</sup>  
And all this day an unaccustomed<sup>7</sup> spirit  
5 Lifts me above the ground with cheerful thoughts.  
I dreamt my lady came and found me dead –  
Strange dream that gives a dead man leave<sup>8</sup> to think! –  
And breathed<sup>9</sup> such life with kisses in my lips

1 promising, pleasing

2 predict/foreshadow (by supernatural means)

3 at hand = near, close by

4 bosom's lord = love

5 easily, cheerfully

6 his heart

7 unaccustomed spirit = unusual/strange/unfamiliar emotion/feeling

8 permission

9 breathed into me

That I revived and was an emperor.

Ah me, how sweet is love itself<sup>10</sup> possessed, 10

When but love's shadows<sup>11</sup> are so rich in joy.

ENTER BALTHASAR, ROMEO'S MAN, WEARING RIDING BOOTS

News from Verona! How now, Balthasar?<sup>12</sup>

Dost thou not bring me letters from the friar?

How doth my lady? Is my father well?

How fares my Juliet?<sup>13</sup> That I ask again, 15

For nothing can be ill if she be well.

*Balthasar* Then she is well, and nothing can be ill.

Her body sleeps in Capel's monument,<sup>14</sup>

And her immortal part with angels lives.<sup>15</sup>

I saw her laid low<sup>16</sup> in her kindred's vault 20

And presently took post<sup>17</sup> to tell it you.

O pardon me for bringing these ill news,

Since you did leave it for my office, sir.

*Romeo* Is it e'en<sup>18</sup> so? Then I defy<sup>19</sup> you, stars!<sup>20</sup>

(*to Balthasar*) Thou knowest my lodging. Get me ink and 25  
paper

10 in and of itself

11 paler/fainter images/traces

12 (BALthaSAR)

13 (JULyet)

14 sepulcher, tomb

15 (verb)

16 under the ground

17 took post = hurried, by means of hiring horses to be available at stages in his journey

18 really, truly, indeed

19 repudiate, challenge\*

20 astrologically determined fate

And hire posthorses.<sup>21</sup> I will hence<sup>22</sup> tonight.

*Balthasar* I do beseech you, sir, have patience.<sup>23</sup>

Your looks are pale and wild and do import<sup>24</sup>

Some misadventure.<sup>25</sup>

*Romeo* Tush, thou art deceived.

30 Leave me and do the thing I bid thee do.

Hast thou no letters to me from the friar?

*Balthasar* No, my good lord.

*Romeo* No matter. Get thee gone

And hire those horses. I'll be with thee straight.

EXIT BALTHASAR

Well, Juliet, I will lie with thee tonight.

35 Let's see for means. O mischief,<sup>26</sup> thou art swift

To enter in the thoughts of desperate men.

I do remember an apothecary,<sup>27</sup>

And hereabouts 'a dwells, which<sup>28</sup> late I noted

In tattered weeds,<sup>29</sup> with overwhelming<sup>30</sup> brows,

40 Culling of simples.<sup>31</sup> Meager<sup>32</sup> were his looks,

21 (see note 17, just above)

22 leave

23 have patience = be calm/move slowly

24 indicate, predict

25 bad luck/fortune

26 evil, misfortune, calamity

27 dealer in/maker of drugs

28 who

29 clothes

30 overhanging, jutting (because lack of food has caused his eyes to seem sunken?)

31 simples = herbs/leaves/roots

32 lean, emaciated

Sharp<sup>33</sup> misery had worn him to the bones,  
 And in his needy<sup>34</sup> shop a tortoise hung,  
 An alligator stuffed, and other skins  
 Of ill-shaped fishes, and about his shelves  
 A beggarly account<sup>35</sup> of empty boxes, 45  
 Green earthen<sup>36</sup> pots, bladders,<sup>37</sup> and musty<sup>38</sup> seeds,  
 Remnants of packthread,<sup>39</sup> and old cakes of roses<sup>40</sup>  
 Were thinly<sup>41</sup> scattered to make up a show.<sup>42</sup>  
 Noting this penury,<sup>43</sup> to myself I said,  
 “An if a man did need a poison now, 50  
 Whose sale is present death in Mantua,  
 Here lives a caitiff<sup>44</sup> wretch would sell it him.”<sup>45</sup>  
 O this same thought did but forerun<sup>46</sup> my need,  
 And this same needy man must<sup>47</sup> sell it me.  
 As I remember, this should be the house. 55  
 Being holiday, the beggar’s shop is shut.  
 What, ho! Apothecary!

33 keen, piercing, severe

34 poor

35 beggarly account = poverty-stricken number/sum/amount

36 clay

37 taken from dead animals and used, much like plastic bags, as containers  
(especially of liquids)

38 moldy

39 twine, cord

40 cakes of roses = compacted rose petals, used for their scent

41 sparsely

42 make up a show = produce/represent/constitute the appearance of a  
mercantile display

43 extreme poverty

44 miserable, piteous (from “captive”)

45 to him

46 anticipate

47 (1) could, (2) should (is likely to), (3) needs/is obliged to

## ENTER APOTHECARY

*Apothecary* Who calls so loud?

*Romeo* Come hither, man. I see that thou art poor.

Hold, there is forty ducats.<sup>48</sup> Let me have

60 A dram of poison, such<sup>49</sup> soon-speeding gear<sup>50</sup>

As will disperse<sup>51</sup> itself through all the veins

That the life-weary<sup>52</sup> taker may fall dead,

And that<sup>53</sup> the trunk<sup>54</sup> may be discharged<sup>55</sup> of breath

As violently as hasty<sup>56</sup> powder fired

65 Doth hurry from the fatal<sup>57</sup> cannon's womb.

*Apothecary* Such mortal<sup>58</sup> drugs I have, but Mantua's law

Is death to any he<sup>59</sup> that utters<sup>60</sup> them.

*Romeo* Art thou so bare<sup>61</sup> and full of wretchedness

And fearest to die? Famine is in thy cheeks,

70 Need and oppression<sup>62</sup> starveth<sup>63</sup> in thine eyes,

Contempt<sup>64</sup> and beggary hangs upon thy back.

48 gold coins

49 such a

50 soon speeding gear = quick-moving (1) stuff, (2) corrupt/foul matter

51 distribute, circulate, spread

52 life-weary = (compound adjective)

53 and that = so that

54 body

55 freed, emptied, relieved

56 rapid, speedy

57 fateful, ruinous, deadly

58 deadly, destructive

59 person

60 sells

61 deprived, poverty-stricken, destitute

62 misfortune, distress

63 suffer most intensely, wither

64 dishonor, disgrace

The world is not thy friend, nor the world's law.

The world affords<sup>65</sup> no law to make thee rich.

Then be not poor, but break it<sup>66</sup> and take this.

*Apothecary* My poverty but not my will consents. 75

*Romeo* I pay thy poverty and not thy will.

*Apothecary* Put this in any liquid thing you will<sup>67</sup>

And drink it off,<sup>68</sup> and if you had the strength

Of twenty men, it would dispatch<sup>69</sup> you straight.

*Romeo* There is thy gold – worse poison to men's souls, 80

Doing more murder in this loathsome world,

Than these poor compounds that thou mayst not sell.

I sell<sup>70</sup> thee poison; thou hast sold me none.

Farewell. Buy food and get thyself in flesh.

(*to the poison*) Come, cordial<sup>71</sup> and not poison, go with me 85

To Juliet's grave, for there must I use thee.

## EXEUNT

65 gives, supplies, grants

66 the law

67 wish to

68 drink it off = drink all of it

69 kill

70 give/hand/deliver to

71 restorative



## SCENE 2

*Verona. Friar Laurence's cell*

ENTER FRIAR JOHN

*John* Holy Franciscan friar, brother, ho!

ENTER FRIAR LAURENCE

*Friar (entering)* This same should be the voice of Friar John.*(seeing Friar John)* Welcome from Mantua. What says Romeo?Or, if his mind<sup>1</sup> be writ, give me his letter.5 *John* Going<sup>2</sup> to find a barefoot brother out,<sup>3</sup>One of our order, to associate me,<sup>4</sup>

Here in this city visiting the sick,

And finding him, the searchers of the town,<sup>5</sup>Suspecting that we both were in a house<sup>6</sup>10 Where the infectious pestilence<sup>7</sup> did reign,<sup>8</sup>Sealed up the doors, and would not let us forth,<sup>9</sup>So that my speed<sup>10</sup> to Mantua there was stayed.<sup>11</sup>*Friar* Who bore my letter, then, to Romeo?*John* I could not send it – here it is again –

15 Nor get a messenger to bring it thee,

1 thought, intention

2 after going

3 find a barefoot brother out = search for a barefoot brother

4 associate me = join with me (friars not being allowed to travel alone)

5 searchers of the town = public officials who located plague sites

6 religious house (monastery or convent)

7 plague

8 did reign = flourished, was prevalent

9 go away, come out

10 swift progress

11 halted

So fearful were they of infection.

*Friar* Unhappy fortune!<sup>12</sup> By my brotherhood,  
 The letter was not nice,<sup>13</sup> but full of charge,<sup>14</sup>  
 Of dear import,<sup>15</sup> and the neglecting it<sup>16</sup>  
 May do much danger.<sup>17</sup> *Friar John*, go hence, 20  
 Get me an iron crow<sup>18</sup> and bring it straight  
 Unto my cell.

*John* Brother, I'll go and bring it thee.

EXIT

*Friar* Now must I to the monument alone.  
 Within this three hours will fair Juliet wake.  
 She will beshrew me much that Romeo 25  
 Hath had no notice of these accidents,<sup>19</sup>  
 But I will write again to Mantua,  
 And keep her at my cell till Romeo come –  
 Poor living corse, closed<sup>20</sup> in a dead man's tomb!

EXIT

12 unhappy fortune! = wretched/miserable/unlucky chance/accident

13 foolish, trivial

14 weight, importance

15 dear import = grievous significance

16 neglecting it = failure to do it

17 harm, damage

18 crowbar

19 occurrences, events (especially of an unfortunate nature)

20 shut, confined

## SCENE 3

*Verona. A churchyard. The monument of the Capulets*

ENTER PARIS AND HIS PAGE WITH FLOWERS AND A TORCH

*Paris* Give me thy torch, boy. Hence,<sup>1</sup> and stand aloof.<sup>2</sup>

Yet put it<sup>3</sup> out, for I would not<sup>4</sup> be seen.

Under yond yew tree<sup>5</sup> lay thee all along,<sup>6</sup>

Holding thine ear close to the hollow<sup>7</sup> ground,

5 So shall no foot upon the churchyard tread,

Being<sup>8</sup> loose, unfirm, with<sup>9</sup> digging up of graves,

But thou shalt hear it. Whistle then to me,

As signal that thou hear'st something approach.

Give me those flowers. Do as I bid thee, go.

10 *Page* (*aside*) I am almost afraid to stand alone

Here in the churchyard, yet I will adventure.

HE RETIRES

*Paris* Sweet flower,<sup>10</sup> with flowers thy bridal bed I strew –

O woe, thy canopy<sup>11</sup> is dust and stones –

Which with sweet<sup>12</sup> water nightly I will dew,<sup>13</sup>

1 go off/away

2 (1) at some distance, (2) apart from whatever happens

3 the burning torch

4 would not = do not wish

5 yew tree: associated with sadness, perhaps for its very dark green foliage;  
often planted in churchyards

6 all along = lengthwise, at full length

7 excavated (dug up for graves)

8 the churchyard being

9 from, because of

10 Juliet

11 covering over a ceremonial procession

12 fragrant, scented

13 (verb)

Or wanting<sup>14</sup> that, with tears distilled<sup>15</sup> by moans. 15  
 The obsequies<sup>16</sup> that I for thee will keep  
 Nightly shall be to strew thy grave and weep.

PAGE WHISTLES

The boy gives warning something doth approach.  
 What cursèd foot wanders this way tonight  
 To cross<sup>17</sup> my obsequies and true love's rite? 20  
 What, with a torch? Muffle<sup>18</sup> me, night, awhile.

RETIRES

ENTER ROMEO AND BALTHASAR WITH A TORCH,  
 A MATTOCK,<sup>19</sup> AND AN IRON CROWBAR

*Romeo* Give me that mattock and the wrenching<sup>20</sup> iron.  
 Hold, take this letter. Early in the morning  
 See thou deliver it to my lord and father.  
 Give me the light. Upon thy life I charge thee, 25  
 Whate'er thou hearest or seest, stand all aloof  
 And do not interrupt me in my course.  
 Why I descend into this bed of death  
 Is partly to behold my lady's face,  
 But chiefly to take thence from her dead finger 30  
 A precious ring, a ring that I must use  
 In dear employment.<sup>21</sup> Therefore hence, be gone.

14 failing, lacking

15 purified, concentrated

16 funeral rites/ceremonies

17 oppose, thwart

18 conceal, envelop

19 tool for digging in hard ground (similar to a pick-axe)

20 used for twisting: the crowbar

21 dear employment = important/honorable matters/business

- But if thou, jealous,<sup>22</sup> dost<sup>23</sup> return to pry<sup>24</sup>  
 In what I farther<sup>25</sup> shall intend to do,  
 35 By heaven, I will tear thee joint by joint  
 And strew this hungry<sup>26</sup> churchyard with thy limbs.  
 The time and my intents are savage wild,<sup>27</sup>  
 More fierce and more inexorable<sup>28</sup> far  
 Than empty<sup>29</sup> tigers or the roaring sea.
- 40 *Balthasar* I will be gone, sir, and not trouble you.  
*Romeo* So<sup>30</sup> shalt thou show me friendship.<sup>31</sup> (*gives him  
 money*) Take thou that.  
 Live, and be prosperous, and farewell, good fellow.  
*Balthasar* (*aside*) For all this same,<sup>32</sup> I'll hide me hereabout.  
 His looks I fear, and his intents I doubt.<sup>33</sup>

## RETIRES

- 45 *Romeo* Thou detestable<sup>34</sup> maw,<sup>35</sup> thou womb<sup>36</sup> of death,  
 Gorged<sup>37</sup> with the dearest<sup>38</sup> morsel<sup>39</sup> of the earth,

22 mistrustful, doubtful, suspicious

23 do

24 spy, peer, observe more closely

25 in addition

26 hungry: a burial place is "hungry" for corpses

27 savage wild = horribly fierce

28 relentless (inEXorABLE)

29 unfed, hungry

30 thus

31 a friendly act/favor/assistance

32 for all this same = despite what he says/has given me

33 mistrust, suspect

34 (DEEtesTABLE)

35 throat, stomach

36 belly-like cavity

37 stuffed, glutted

38 most glorious/beloved/precious

39 a choice dish/snack/small meal

Thus I enforce<sup>40</sup> thy rotten jaws to open,  
 And in despite<sup>41</sup> I'll cram<sup>42</sup> thee with more food.<sup>43</sup>

## ROMEO OPENS THE TOMB

*Paris* This is that banished haughty Montague  
 That murdered my love's cousin – with which grief 50  
 It is supposed the fair creature died –  
 And here is come to do some villainous shame<sup>44</sup>  
 To the dead bodies. I will apprehend<sup>45</sup> him.  
 (*to Romeo*) Stop thy unhallowed toil,<sup>46</sup> vile Montague.  
 Can vengeance be pursu'd further than death? 55  
 Condemnèd villain, I do apprehend thee.  
 Obey, and go with me, for thou must die.

*Romeo* I must indeed, and therefore came I hither.  
 Good gentle youth, tempt not a desperate man.  
 Fly hence and leave me. Think upon these gone,<sup>47</sup> 60  
 Let them affright thee. I beseech thee, youth,  
 Put not another sin upon my head  
 By urging<sup>48</sup> me to fury. O be gone.  
 By heaven, I love thee better than myself,  
 For I come hither armed against myself. 65  
 Stay not, be gone. Live, and hereafter say

40 force, compel

41 contempt, scorn, defiance

42 stuff (verb)

43 more food = an additional meal (himself)

44 villainous shame = wicked/depraved/vile indecency, disgraceful/offensive deed

45 seize, arrest

46 unhallowed toil = profane/wicked/impious labor

47 these gone = the corpses in the tomb (now displayed)

48 pressing, pushing, spurring

A madman's mercy bid thee run away.

*Paris* I do defy thy conjuration<sup>49</sup>

And apprehend thee for a felon<sup>50</sup> here.

70 *Romeo* Wilt thou provoke me? Then have at thee, boy!

THEY FIGHT

*Page* O Lord, they fight! I will go call the watch.

EXIT PAGE

PARIS FALLS

*Paris* O I am slain! If thou be merciful,

Open the tomb, lay me with Juliet.

HE DIES

*Romeo* In faith, I will. Let me peruse<sup>51</sup> this face.

75 *Mercutio's* kinsman, noble County Paris!

What said my man<sup>52</sup> when my betossed<sup>53</sup> soul

Did not attend him as we rode? I think

He told me Paris should have<sup>54</sup> married Juliet.

Said he not so? Or did I dream it so?

80 Or am I mad, hearing him talk of Juliet

To think it was so? (*to Paris*) O give me thy hand,

One writ with<sup>55</sup> me in sour misfortune's book.

49 (1) appeal, solemn charge, (2) trick (CONjurAtiON)

50 (1) wretch, villain, (2) convicted criminal

51 inspect, examine

52 what said my man = what did my servant say

53 agitated, disturbed

54 should have = was supposed to have

55 writ with = recorded/inscribed ("written") along with

I'll bury thee in a triumphant<sup>56</sup> grave.  
 A grave? O no, a lantern,<sup>57</sup> slaughtered youth,  
 For here lies Juliet, and her beauty makes  
 This vault a feasting presence<sup>58</sup> full of light.  
 Death, lie thou there, by a dead man interred.<sup>59</sup>

85

## LAYS PARIS IN THE TOMB

(*to and of himself*) How oft when men are at the point of  
 death

Have they been merry! Which their keepers<sup>60</sup> call  
 A light'ning<sup>61</sup> before<sup>62</sup> death. O how may I  
 Call this a light'ning? (*to Juliet*) O my love, my wife,  
 Death that hath sucked the honey of thy breath  
 Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty.  
 Thou art not conquered. Beauty's ensign<sup>63</sup> yet  
 Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,  
 And death's pale flag is not advanced<sup>64</sup> there.  
 Tybalt, liest thou there in thy bloody sheet?<sup>65</sup>  
 O what more favor can I do to thee  
 Than with that hand<sup>66</sup> that cut thy youth in twain<sup>67</sup>

90

95

56 victor's, conqueror's

57 (1) transparent case, enclosing and illuminated by a light, (2) top of a lighthouse, (3) structure with glazed light-admitting apertures/windows

58 feasting presence = banqueting/celebratory place

59 deposited, buried

60 custodians, guards

61 revival ("lightening")

62 BEEfore

63 sign, flag, emblem

64 raised, lifted

65 burial shroud ("winding sheet")

66 his own hand

67 two



100 To sunder<sup>68</sup> his that was thine enemy?  
 Forgive me, cousin.<sup>69</sup> Ah, dear Juliet,  
 Why art thou yet so fair? Shall I believe  
 That unsubstantial<sup>70</sup> Death is amorous,  
 And that the lean abhorrèd monster keeps  
 105 Thee here in dark to be his paramour?<sup>71</sup>  
 For fear of that I still will stay with thee  
 And never from this palace<sup>72</sup> of dim night  
 Depart again. Here, here will I remain  
 With worms<sup>73</sup> that are thy chambermaids. O here  
 110 Will I set up my everlasting rest  
 And shake<sup>74</sup> the yoke of inauspicious stars<sup>75</sup>  
 From this world-wearied flesh.<sup>76</sup> (*to himself*) Eyes, look your  
 last.  
 Arms, take your last embrace! (*embracing Juliet*) And lips,  
 O you  
 The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss  
 115 A dateless bargain to engrossing Death.<sup>77</sup> (*kisses Juliet*)  
 (*to the poison*) Come, bitter conduct,<sup>78</sup> come, unsavory<sup>79</sup>  
 guide,

68 put an end to, cut off

69 Tybalt (cousin by marriage)

70 without body/material substance

71 lady love, mistress

72 (1) storehouse, (2) palatial/stately mansion

73 with worms = together with the worms/maggots

74 flee, be free of

75 yoke of inauspicious stars = fetters/chains of ill omened/malign  
 astrological influences

76 this world-wearied flesh = this flesh (himself) tired of the living world

77 dateless bargain to engrossing Death = eternal sale (of himself) to all-  
 purchasing/greedy

78 bitter conduct = painful/grievous/afflicting escort

79 disagreeable, unpleasant, distasteful, offensive

Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on  
 The dashing<sup>80</sup> rocks thy seasick weary bark.<sup>81</sup>  
 Here's to my love! (*drinks*) O true apothecary!  
 Thy drugs are quick. Thus with a kiss I die.

120

HE FALLS

ENTER FRIAR LAURENCE, WITH LANTERN,  
 CROWBAR, AND SPADE

*Friar* Saint Francis be my speed.<sup>82</sup> How oft tonight  
 Have my old feet stumbled at<sup>83</sup> graves. Who's there?

*Balthasar* Here's one, a friend, and one that knows you well.

*Friar* Bliss<sup>84</sup> be upon you. Tell me, good my friend,  
 What torch is yond<sup>85</sup> that vainly<sup>86</sup> lends his light  
 To grubs<sup>87</sup> and eyeless skulls? As I discern,<sup>88</sup>  
 It burneth in the Capels' monument.

125

*Balthasar* It doth so, holy sir, and there's my master,<sup>89</sup>  
 One that you love.

*Friar* Who is it?

*Balthasar* Romeo.

*Friar* How long hath he been there?

*Balthasar* Full half an hour.

130

*Friar* Go with me to the vault.

*Balthasar* I dare not, sir.

80 violently splashed

81 (himself: like a ship, he is bearing/carrying the poison)

82 help, assistance (see *1 Henry IV* 3.1.189, "Good manners be your speed!")

83 on

84 felicity, joy

85 that one over there ("yonder")

86 pointlessly, uselessly

87 maggots

88 as I discern = as well as I can see/tell

89 there's my master = in there is my master

My master knows not but<sup>90</sup> I am gone hence,  
 And fearfully<sup>91</sup> did menace me with death  
 If I did stay to look on his intents.<sup>92</sup>

135 *Friar* Stay, then, I'll go alone. Fear comes upon me.

O much I fear some ill unthrifty<sup>93</sup> thing.

*Balthasar* As I did sleep under this yew tree here,

I dreamt my master and another fought,

And that my master slew him.

*Friar* Romeo!<sup>94</sup>

140 Alack, alack, what<sup>95</sup> blood is this which stains

The stony<sup>96</sup> entrance of this sepulcher?

What mean<sup>97</sup> these masterless<sup>98</sup> and gory swords

To lie discolored by this place of peace?<sup>99</sup>

ENTERS THE TOMB

Romeo! O pale! Who else? What, Paris too?

145 And steeped<sup>100</sup> in blood? Ah, what an unkind<sup>101</sup> hour

Is guilty of this lamentable chance?<sup>102</sup>

The lady stirs.

JULIET RISES

90 knows not but = thinks/believes that

91 dreadfully, terribly

92 plans, projects, purposes

93 harmful, wasteful

94 exclamation of surprise/shock (hearing what Romeo has done)

95 whose

96 stone

97 what mean = what does it mean that

98 without a master/owner

99 eternal peace, not worldly

100 soaked

101 unnatural

102 accident, mishap

- Juliet* O comfortable<sup>103</sup> friar, where is my lord?  
 I do remember well where I should<sup>104</sup> be,  
 And there I am. Where is my Romeo? 150
- Friar* I hear some noise. Lady, come from that nest  
 Of death, contagion,<sup>105</sup> and unnatural sleep.  
 A greater power than we can contradict  
 Hath thwarted our intents. Come, come away.  
 Thy husband in thy bosom<sup>106</sup> there lies dead, 155  
 And Paris too. Come, I'll dispose of<sup>107</sup> thee  
 Among a sisterhood of holy nuns.  
 Stay not to question, for the watch is coming.  
 Come, go, good Juliet. I dare no longer stay.
- Juliet* Go, get thee hence, for I will not away. 160

## EXIT FRIAR

- What's here? A cup, closed in my true love's hand?  
 Poison, I see, hath been his timeless<sup>108</sup> end.  
 O churl.<sup>109</sup> Drunk all, and left no friendly drop  
 To help me after?<sup>110</sup> I will kiss thy lips.  
 Haply<sup>111</sup> some poison yet doth hang on them 165  
 To make me die with a restorative.<sup>112</sup>

103 reassuring, cheering (COMforTABLE)

104 am supposed to

105 sickness, plague

106 in thy bosom = lying against your body

107 dispose of = place (verb)

108 premature, badly timed

109 (1) rude/uncouth person, (2) miser

110 come after you

111 perhaps

112 with a restorative = from/by means of a repayment/restitution (for his not having left any poison for her)

KISSES HIM

Thy lips are warm!

*Watchman 1* (*within*) Lead, boy. Which way?

*Juliet* Yea, noise? Then I'll be brief. O happy<sup>113</sup> dagger.

SNATCHES ROMEO'S DAGGER

This<sup>114</sup> is thy sheath. There rest, and let me die.

SHE STABS HERSELF AND FALLS ON ROMEO'S BODY

ENTER PAGE AND WATCHMAN

170 *Page* This is the place. There, where the torch doth burn.

*Watchman 1* The ground is bloody. Search about the churchyard.  
Go, some of you. Whoe'er you find attach.<sup>115</sup>

EXEUNT SOME OF THE WATCH

Pitiful sight! Here lies the County slain,  
And Juliet bleeding, warm, and newly dead,  
175 Who here hath lain this two days buried.  
Go tell the Prince, run to the Capulets,  
Raise up the Montagues. Some others search.

EXEUNT OTHERS OF THE WATCH

We see the ground<sup>116</sup> whereon these woes<sup>117</sup> do lie,  
But the true ground<sup>118</sup> of all these piteous woes

113 lucky, opportune, appropriate

114 her body

115 arrest, seize

116 earth

117 (1) miseries, misfortunes, (2) miserable/unfortunate bodies/corpses

118 foundation, basis, explanation

We cannot without circumstance<sup>119</sup> descry.<sup>120</sup> 180

ENTER SOME OF THE WATCH, WITH BALTHASAR

*Watchman 2* Here's Romeo's man. We found him in the churchyard.

*Watchman 1* Hold him in safety<sup>121</sup> till the Prince come hither.

ENTER FRIAR LAURENCE AND ANOTHER WATCHMAN

*Watchman 3* Here is a friar that trembles, sighs, and weeps.

We took this mattock and this spade from him

As he was coming from this churchyard side.<sup>122</sup> 185

*Watchman 1* A great suspicion.<sup>123</sup> Stay the friar too.

ENTER THE PRINCE, WITH ATTENDANTS

*Prince* What misadventure<sup>124</sup> is so early up,<sup>125</sup>

That calls our person<sup>126</sup> from our morning rest?

ENTER CAPULET AND LADY CAPULET, WITH OTHERS

*Capulet* What should<sup>127</sup> it be, that they so shriek abroad?<sup>128</sup>

*Lady Capulet* The people in the street cry "Romeo," 190

Some "Juliet," and some "Paris," and all run,

119 context, causes, reasons

120 discover, detect, perceive

121 close/secure custody

122 this churchyard side = this side of the churchyard

123 great suspicion = large/weighty ground for suspicion

124 bad fortune

125 (1) out of bed, risen, (2) started, stirring, in progress

126 our person = me

127 might, must

128 shriek abroad = cry out/scream everywhere/all over

With open outcry,<sup>129</sup> toward our monument.

*Prince* What fear is this which startles<sup>130</sup> in our ears?

*Watchman 1* Sovereign, here lies the County Paris slain,

195 And Romeo dead, and Juliet, dead before,

Warm and new killed.

*Prince* Search, seek, and know how this foul murder  
comes.

*Watchman 1* Here is a friar, and slaughtered Romeo's man,<sup>131</sup>

With instruments<sup>132</sup> upon them fit to open<sup>133</sup>

200 These dead men's tombs.

*Capulet* O heavens! O wife, look how our daughter  
bleeds!<sup>134</sup>

This dagger hath mista'en,<sup>135</sup> for, lo, his house<sup>136</sup>

Is empty on the back<sup>137</sup> of Montague,<sup>138</sup>

And it misseathed in my daughter's bosom.

205 *Lady Capulet* O me! this sight of death is as a bell

That warns<sup>139</sup> my old age to<sup>140</sup> a sepulcher.

ENTER MONTAGUE, WITH OTHERS

*Prince* Come, Montague, for thou art early up

129 open outcry = general/universal/uncontrolled hue and cry

130 starts up, shocks, stuns

131 slaughtered Romeo's man = servant of dead Romeo

132 tools

133 fit to open = suitable for opening

134 (as bodies dead for some while do not bleed)

135 made an error/mistake

136 his house = the dagger's housing/sheath

137 on the back: swords were worn on the side, daggers at the belt, in back

138 Romeo

139 (1) informs, makes known to, (2) describes, (3) instructs, teaches

140 of, about

- To see thy son and heir more early down.<sup>141</sup>
- Montague* Alas, my liege,<sup>142</sup> my wife is dead tonight.<sup>143</sup>  
 Grief of<sup>144</sup> my son's exile hath stopped her breath. 210  
 What further woe conspires against mine age?<sup>145</sup>
- Prince* Look, and thou shalt see.
- Montague* (to *Romeo*) O thou untaught!<sup>146</sup> What<sup>147</sup> manners is  
 in this,  
 To press<sup>148</sup> before thy father to a grave?
- Prince* Seal up the mouth<sup>149</sup> of outrage<sup>150</sup> for a while, 215  
 Till we can clear these ambiguities<sup>151</sup>  
 And know their spring,<sup>152</sup> their head,<sup>153</sup> their true  
 descent,<sup>154</sup>  
 And then will I be general<sup>155</sup> of your woes  
 And lead you, even to death.<sup>156</sup> Meantime forbear,  
 And let mischance be slave to patience.<sup>157</sup> 220

141 fallen

142 lord

143 is dead tonight = died last night

144 grief of = the grief of, grief for

145 old age

146 ignorant, unenlightened

147 what sort/kind of

148 thrust, push

149 the mouth = tomb opening

150 violent/passionate lamentation

151 doubts, uncertainties

152 source (as of a stream)

153 origin (conception, as of an idea)

154 derivation, line of descent (as of a lineage proceeding from generation to generation)

155 person in charge

156 the death of whoever is responsible

157 mischance be slave to patience = disaster/calamity be subject to/  
 dominated by patience



Bring forth the parties of suspicion.<sup>158</sup>

*Friar* I am the greatest,<sup>159</sup> able to do least,  
 Yet most suspected, as the time and place  
 Doth make<sup>160</sup> against me, of this direful murder,  
 225 And here I stand, both to impeach and purge<sup>161</sup>  
 Myself condemnèd<sup>162</sup> and myself excused.<sup>163</sup>

*Prince* Then say it once<sup>164</sup> what thou dost know in this.

*Friar* I will be brief, for my short date of breath<sup>165</sup>  
 Is not so long as is a tedious tale.  
 230 Romeo, there dead, was husband to that Juliet,  
 And she, there dead, that Romeo's faithful wife.  
 I married them, and their stol'n<sup>166</sup> marriage day  
 Was Tybalt's doomsday,<sup>167</sup> whose untimely death  
 Banished the new made bridegroom from this city,  
 235 For whom – and not for Tybalt – Juliet pined.<sup>168</sup>  
 (*to Capulet*) You, to remove that siege<sup>169</sup> of grief from her,  
 Betrothed and would have married her perforce  
 To County Paris. Then comes she to me  
 And with wild looks bid me devise some mean<sup>170</sup>

158 parties of suspicion = suspected persons

159 principal one

160 produce/cause suspicion

161 impeach and purge = accuse and clear

162 called guilty

163 freed from blame

164 once and for all, in short

165 date of breath = time/length of life

166 secret

167 death day

168 grieved, suffered, longed for

169 period of illness/difficulty

170 way (“means”)

To rid<sup>171</sup> her from this second marriage, 240  
 Or in my cell there<sup>172</sup> would she kill herself.  
 Then gave I her, so tutored<sup>173</sup> by my art,  
 A sleeping potion, which so<sup>174</sup> took effect  
 As I intended, for it wrought<sup>175</sup> on her  
 The form<sup>176</sup> of death. Meantime I writ to Romeo 245  
 That he should hither come as<sup>177</sup> this dire night  
 To help to take her from her borrowed grave,  
 Being the time the potion's force should cease.  
 But he which<sup>178</sup> bore my letter, Friar John,  
 Was stayed by accident, and yesternight 250  
 Returned<sup>179</sup> my letter back. Then all alone  
 At the prefixèd<sup>180</sup> hour of her waking  
 Came I to take her from her kindred's vault,  
 Meaning to keep her closely<sup>181</sup> at my cell  
 Till I conveniently<sup>182</sup> could send<sup>183</sup> to Romeo. 255  
 But when I came, some minute ere the time  
 Of her awaking, here untimely lay  
 The noble Paris and true Romeo dead.

171 free

172 in that case, then ("then and there")

173 taught, instructed

174 accordingly, thus, then

175 worked

176 visible appearance/likeness

177 precisely/exactly on ("at the time of")

178 who

179 brought

180 appointed, previously set

181 privately, secretly

182 properly, appropriately

183 send a message/messenger

She wakes,<sup>184</sup> and I entreated<sup>185</sup> her come<sup>186</sup> forth  
 260 And bear this work<sup>187</sup> of heaven with patience.  
 But then a noise did scare me from the tomb,  
 And she, too desperate, would not go with me,  
 But, as it seems, did violence on herself.  
 All this I know,<sup>188</sup> and to the marriage  
 265 Her nurse is privy.<sup>189</sup> And if aught in this  
 Miscarried<sup>190</sup> by my fault, let my old life  
 Be sacrificed, some hour before his<sup>191</sup> time,  
 Unto<sup>192</sup> the rigor<sup>193</sup> of severest law.

*Prince* We still have known thee for a holy man.

270 *Where's Romeo's man? What can he say in this?*

*Balthasar* I brought my master news of Juliet's death,

And then in post he came from Mantua

To this same place, to this same monument.

This letter he early<sup>194</sup> bid me give his father,

275 And threatened me with death, going<sup>195</sup> in the vault,

If I departed not<sup>196</sup> and left him there.

*Prince* Give me the letter. I will look on<sup>197</sup> it.

184 woke

185 asked, begged

186 to come

187 act, deed

188 (he has knowledge, as opposed to mere belief)

189 (1) cognizant, aware, (2) intimately acquainted/involved

190 came to harm, went wrong

191 its

192 according to, to the limit of

193 strictness, harshness

194 at the beginning/the start

195 should I go

196 departed not = did not leave

197 at

Where is the County's page that raised<sup>198</sup> the watch?

(to Page) Sirrah, what made your master<sup>199</sup> in this place?

Page He came with flowers to strew his lady's grave, 280

And bid me stand aloof, and so I did.

Anon comes one with light to ope<sup>200</sup> the tomb,

And by and by my master drew<sup>201</sup> on him,

And then I ran away to call the watch.

Prince This letter doth make good the friar's words, 285

Their course of love, the tidings<sup>202</sup> of her death,

And here he writes that he did buy a poison

Of<sup>203</sup> a poor pothecary,<sup>204</sup> and therewithal<sup>205</sup>

Came to this vault to die, and lie with Juliet.

Where be these enemies? Capulet, Montague, 290

See what a scourge<sup>206</sup> is laid upon<sup>207</sup> your hate,

That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love.

And I, for winking at your discords too,

Have lost a brace<sup>208</sup> of kinsmen. All are punished.

Capulet O brother Montague, give me thy hand. 295

This is my daughter's jointure,<sup>209</sup> for no more

Can I demand.<sup>210</sup>

198 roused, called

199 what made your master = what was your master doing

200 open

201 drew his sword

202 news

203 from

204 apothecary

205 (1) with that, (2) in addition

206 whip, lash, punishment

207 laid upon = brought down/put on, applied to

208 pair

209 sum left to wife if husband predeceases her

210 claim

- Montague* But I can give thee more,  
 For I will raise<sup>211</sup> her statue<sup>212</sup> in pure gold,  
 300 That whiles<sup>213</sup> Verona by that name is known  
 There shall no figure<sup>214</sup> at such rate<sup>215</sup> be set  
 As that of true and faithful Juliet.
- Capulet* As rich shall Romeo's<sup>216</sup> by his lady's lie,<sup>217</sup>  
 Poor sacrifices of our enmity.<sup>218</sup>
- 305 *Prince* A glooming<sup>219</sup> peace this morning with it brings.  
 The sun for sorrow will not show his head.  
 Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things.  
 Some shall be pardoned, and some punished,  
 For never was a story of more woe  
 310 Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.

EXEUNT OMNES

211 set up, build, construct

212 image, effigy

213 during the time, as long as

214 (1) person's appearance, (2) image/representation ("statue") of a person's appearance

215 value

216 Romeo's statue

217 be located/situated, remain (in modern usage, statues *stand*: these however are "images, effigies" and planned to be horizontal, not vertical)

218 (ENmiTY – the final syllable pronounced like modern "tie")

219 sullen, melancholy, dark

AN ESSAY BY HAROLD BLOOM



Shakespeare's first authentic tragedy has sometimes been critically undervalued, perhaps because of its popularity. Though *Romeo and Juliet* is a triumph of dramatic lyricism, its tragic ending usurps most other aspects of the play and abandons us to unhappy estimates of whether, and to what degree, its young lovers are responsible for their own catastrophe. Harold Goddard lamented that the Prologue's "A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life" had "surrendered this drama to the astrologers," though more than the stars in their courses are to blame for the destruction of the superb Juliet. Alas, half a century after Goddard, the tragedy more frequently is surrendered to commissars of gender and power, who can thrash the patriarchy, including Shakespeare himself, for victimizing Juliet.

Thomas McAlindon in his refreshingly sane *Shakespeare's Tragic Cosmos* (1991) traces the dynamics of conflict in the dramatist back to the rival worldviews of Heraclitus and Empedocles, as refined and modified in Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Knight's Tale*. For Heraclitus, all things flowed, as Empedocles visualized a strife between Love and Death. Chaucer, rather than Ovid or Christopher Marlowe, was the ancestor of Shakespeare's greatest originality,

that invention of the human. Chaucer's ironic yet amiable version of the religion of love, more perhaps in his *Troilus and Criseyde* than in *The Knight's Tale*, is the essential context for *Romeo and Juliet*. Time's ironies govern love in Chaucer, as they will in *Romeo and Juliet*. Chaucer's human nature is essentially Shakespeare's: the deepest link between the two greatest English poets was temperamental rather than intellectual or sociopolitical. Love dies or else lovers die: those are the pragmatic possibilities for the two poets, each of them experientially wise beyond wisdom.

Shakespeare, somewhat unlike Chaucer, shied away from depicting the death of love rather than the death of lovers. Does anyone, except Hamlet, ever fall out of love in Shakespeare? Hamlet denies anyway that he ever loved Ophelia, and I believe him. By the time the play ends, he loves no one, whether it be the dead Ophelia or the dead father, the dead Gertrude or the dead Yorick, and one wonders if this frightening charismatic ever could have loved anyone. If there were an act 6 to Shakespeare's comedies, doubtless many of the concluding marriages would approximate the condition of Shakespeare's own union with Anne Hathaway. My observation, of course, is nonsensical if you would have it so, but most of the Shakespearean audience—then, now, and always—goes on believing that Shakespeare uniquely represented realities. Poor Falstaff never will stop loving Hal, and the admirably Christian Antonio always will pine for Bassanio. Whom Shakespeare himself loved we do not know, but the Sonnets seem more than a fiction and, at least in this aspect of life, Shakespeare evidently was not so cold as his Hamlet.

There are mature lovers in Shakespeare, most notably Antony and Cleopatra, who cheerfully sell each other out for reasons of state, yet return to each other in their suicides. Both Romeo and

Antony kill themselves because they falsely think their beloveds are dead (Antony bungles the suicide, as he does everything else). The most passionate marriage in Shakespeare, the Macbeths', subtly appears to have its sexual difficulties and ends in madness and suicide for Queen Macbeth, prompting the most equivocal of elegiac reflections by her usurping husband. "Yet Edmund was below'd," the icy villain of *King Lear* overhears himself saying, when the bodies of Goneril and Regan are brought in.

The varieties of passionate love between the sexes are endlessly Shakespeare's concern; sexual jealousy finds its most flamboyant artists in Othello and Leontes, but the virtual identity of the torments of love and jealousy is a Shakespearean invention, later to be refined by Nathaniel Hawthorne and Marcel Proust. Shakespeare, more than any other author, has instructed the West in the catastrophes of sexuality, and has invented the formula that the sexual becomes the erotic when crossed by the shadow of death. There had to be one high song of the erotic by Shakespeare, one lyrical and tragicomical paean celebrating an unmixed love and lamenting its inevitable destruction. *Romeo and Juliet* is unmatched, in Shakespeare and in the world's literature, as a vision of an uncompromising mutual love that perishes of its own idealism and intensity.

There are a few isolated instances of realistic distincts in Shakespeare's characters before *Romeo and Juliet*: Launce in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, the Bastard Faulconbridge in *King John*, Richard II, self-destructive king and superb metaphysical poet. The fourfold of Juliet, Mercutio, the Nurse, and Romeo outnumber and overgo these earlier breakthroughs in human invention. *Romeo and Juliet* matters, as a play, because of these four exuberantly realized characters.



It is easier to see the vividness of Mercutio and the Nurse than it is to absorb and sustain the erotic greatness of Juliet and the heroic effort of Romeo to approximate her sublime state of being in love. Shakespeare, with a prophetic insight, knows that he must lead his audience beyond Mercutio's obscene ironies if they are to be worthy of apprehending Juliet, for her sublimity *is* the play and guarantees the tragedy of this tragedy. Mercutio, the scene stealer of the play, had to be killed off if it was to remain Juliet's and Romeo's play; keep Mercutio in acts 4 and 5, and the contention of love and death would have to cease. We overinvest in Mercutio because he insures us against our own erotic eagerness for doom; he is in the play to some considerable purpose. So, in an even darker way, is the Nurse, who helps guarantee the final disaster. The Nurse and Mercutio, both of them audience favorites, are nevertheless bad news, in different but complementary ways. Shakespeare, at this point in his career, may have underestimated his burgeoning powers, because Mercutio and the Nurse go on seducing audiences, readers, directors, and critics. Their verbal exuberances make them forerunners of Touchstone and Jacques, rancid ironists, but also of the dangerously eloquent manipulative villains Iago and Edmund.

Shakespeare's greatness began with *Love's Labour's Lost* (1594–95, revised 1597) and *Richard II* (1595), superb achievements respectively in comedy and in history. Yet *Romeo and Juliet* (1595–96) has rightly overshadowed both, though I cannot quite place it for eminence with *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, composed simultaneously with Shakespeare's first serious tragedy. The permanent popularity, now of mythic intensity, of *Romeo and Juliet* is more than justified, since the play is the largest and most persuasive cel-

ebriation of romantic love in Western literature. When I think of the play, without rereading and teaching it, or attending yet one more inadequate performance, I first remember neither the tragic outcome nor the gloriously vivid Mercutio and the Nurse. My mind goes directly to the vital center, act 2, scene 2, with its incandescent exchange between the lovers:

*Romeo* Lady, by yonder blessed moon I swear,

That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops –

*Juliet* O swear not by the moon, th' inconstant moon,

That monthly changes in her circled orb,

Lest that thy love prove likewise variable.

*Romeo* What shall I swear by?

*Juliet* Do not swear at all,

Or if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self,

Which is the god of my idolatry,

And I'll believe thee.

*Romeo* If my heart's dear love –

*Juliet* Well, do not swear. Although I joy in thee,

I have no joy of this contract tonight.

It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden,

Too like the lightening, which doth cease to be

Ere one can say "It lightens." Sweet, good night.

This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,

May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet.

Good night, good night. As sweet repose and rest

Come to thy heart as that within my breast.

*Romeo* O wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?

*Juliet* What satisfaction canst thou have tonight?

*Romeo* Th' exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine.

*Juliet* I gave thee mine before thou didst request it,  
 And yet I would it were to give again.  
*Romeo* Wouldst thou withdraw it? For what purpose, love?  
*Juliet* But to be frank and give it thee again.  
 And yet I wish but for the thing I have.  
 My bounty is as boundless as the sea,  
 My love as deep. The more I give to thee,  
 The more I have, for both are infinite.

[2.2.107–35]

The revelation of Juliet's nature here might be called an epiphany in the religion of love. Chaucer has nothing like this, nor does Dante, since his Beatrice's love for him transcends sexuality. Unprecedented in literature (though presumably not in life), Juliet precisely does not transcend the human heroine. Whether Shakespeare reinvents the representation of a very young woman (she is not yet fourteen) in love, or perhaps does even more than that, is difficult to decide. How do you distance Juliet? You only shame yourself by bringing irony to a contemplation of her consciousness. William Hazlitt, spurred by a nostalgia for his own lost dreams of love, caught better than any other critic the exact temper of this scene: "He has founded the passion of the two lovers not in the pleasures they had experienced, but on all the pleasures they had *not* experienced."

It is the sense of an infinity yet to come that is evoked by Juliet, nor can we doubt that her bounty is "as boundless as the sea." When Rosalind in *As You Like It* repeats this simile, it is in a tonality that subtly isolates Juliet's difference:

*Rosalind* O coz, coz, coz, my pretty little coz, that thou didst  
 know how many fathoms deep I am in love! But it cannot

be sounded. My affection hath an unknown bottom, like the Bay of Portugal.

*Celia* Or rather bottomless, that as fast as you pour affection in, it runs out.

*Rosalind* No. That same wicked bastard of Venus, that was begot of thought, conceived of spleen and born of madness, that blind rascally boy that abuses everyone's eyes because his own are out, let him be judge how deep I am in love.

[4.1.195–205]

This is the sublimest of female wits, who one imagines would advise Romeo and Juliet to “die by attorney,” and who knows that women, as well as men, “have died from time to time and worms have eaten them, but not for love.” Romeo and Juliet, alas, are exceptions, and die for love rather than live for wit. Shakespeare allows nothing like Rosalind's supreme intelligence to intrude upon Juliet's authentic rapture. Mercutio, endlessly obscene, is not qualified to darken Juliet's intimations of ecstasy. The play has already made clear how brief this happiness must be. Against that context, against also all of his own ironic reservations, Shakespeare allows Juliet the most exalted declaration of romantic love in the language:

*Juliet* But to be frank and give it thee again;  
And yet I wish but for the thing I have.  
My bounty is as boundless as the sea,  
My love as deep: The more I give to thee  
The more I have, for both are infinite.

[2.2.131–35]

We have to measure the rest of this play against these five lines, miraculous in their legitimate pride and poignance. They defy Dr. Johnson's wry remark on Shakespeare's rhetorical extravagances throughout the play: "his pathetick strains are always polluted with some unexpected depravations." Molly Mahood, noting that there are at least 175 puns and allied wordplays in *Romeo and Juliet*, finds them appropriate to a riddling drama where "Death has long been Romeo's rival and enjoys Juliet at the last," an appropriate finale for doom-eager lovers. Yet little in the drama suggests that Romeo and Juliet are in love with death, as well as with each other. Shakespeare stands back from assigning blame, whether to the feuding older generation, or to the lovers, or to fate, time, chance, and the cosmological contraries. Julia Kristeva, rather too courageously not standing back, rushes in to discover "a discreet version of the Japanese *Realm of the Senses*," a baroque sadomasochistic motion picture.

Clearly Shakespeare took some risks in letting us judge this tragedy for ourselves, but that refusal to usurp his audience's freedom allowed ultimately for the composition of the final high tragedies. I think that I speak for more than myself when I assert that the love shared by Romeo and Juliet is as healthy and normative a passion as Western literature affords us. It concludes in mutual suicide, but not because either of the lovers lusts for death, or mingles hatred with desire.

Mercutio is the most notorious scene stealer in all of Shakespeare, and there is a tradition (reported by John Dryden) that Shakespeare declared he was obliged to kill off Mercutio, lest Mercutio kill Shakespeare and hence the play. Dr. Johnson rightly commended Mercutio for wit, gaiety, and courage; presumably the

great critic chose to ignore that Mercutio also is obscene, heartless, and quarrelsome. Mercutio promises a grand comic role, and yet disturbs us also with his extraordinary rhapsody concerning Queen Mab, who at first seems to belong more to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* than to *Romeo and Juliet*:

*Mercutio* O then I see Queen Mab hath been with you.

She is the fairies' midwife, and she comes  
 In shape no bigger than an agate stone  
 On the forefinger of an alderman,  
 Drawn with a team of little atomies  
 Athwart men's noses as they lie asleep –  
 Her wagon spokes made of long spinners' legs;  
 The cover, of the wings of grasshoppers;  
 Her traces, of the smallest spider's web,  
 Her collars, of the moonshine's wat'ry beams;  
 Her whip, of cricket's bone; the lash, of film;  
 Her wagoner, a small gray-coated gnat,  
 Not half so big as a round little worm  
 Pricked from the lazy finger of a maid;  
 Her chariot is an empty hazelnut,  
 Made by the joiner squirrel or old grub,  
 Time out o' mine the fairies' coachmakers.  
 And in this state she gallops night by night  
 Through lovers' brains, and then they dream of love;  
 O'er courtiers' knees, that dream on curtsies straight;  
 O'er lawyers' fingers who straight dream on fees;  
 O'er ladies' lips, who straight on kisses dream,  
 Which oft the angry Mab with blisters plagues  
 Because their breaths with sweetmeats tainted are.

Sometimes she gallops o'er a courtier's nose,  
 And then dreams he of smelling out a suit;  
 And sometime comes she with a tithe pig's tail  
 Tickling a parson's nose as 'a lies asleep,  
 Then dreams he of another benefice.  
 Sometimes she driveth o'er a soldier's neck  
 And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats,  
 Of breaches, ambuscadoes, Spanish blades,  
 Of healths five fathom deep; and then anon  
 Drums in his ear, at which he starts and wakes,  
 And being thus frightened swears a prayer or two  
 And sleeps again. This is that very Mab  
 That plats the manes of horses in the night  
 And bakes the elflocks in foul sluttish hair,  
 Which once untangled much misfortune bodes.  
 This is the hag, when maids lie on their backs,  
 That presses them and learns them first to bear,  
 Making them women of good carriage.  
 This is she —

[I.4.53–95]

Romeo interrupts, since clearly Mercutio never stops once started. This mercurial vision of Queen Mab—where “Queen” probably means a whore, and Mab refers to a Celtic fairy, who frequently manifests as a will-o'-the-wisp—is anything but out of character. Mercutio's Mab is the midwife of our erotic dreams, aiding us to give birth to our deep fantasies, and she appears to possess a childlike charm for much of the length of Mercutio's description. But since he is a major instance of what D. H. Lawrence was to call “sex-in-the-head,” Mercutio is setting us up for the

revelation of Mab as the nightmare, the incubus who impregnates maids. Romeo interrupts to say: "Thou talkst of nothing," where "nothing" is another slang term for the vagina. Mercutio's bawdy obsessiveness is splendidly employed by Shakespeare as a reduction of Romeo and Juliet's honest exaltation of their passion. Directly before their first rendezvous, we hear Mercutio at his most obscenely exuberant pitch:

If love be blind, love cannot hit the mark.  
 Now will he sit under a medlar tree  
 And wish his mistress were that kind of fruit  
 As maids call medlars when they laugh alone.  
 O Romeo, that she were, O that she were  
 An open arse, and thou a pop'rin pear!

[2.1.33–38]

Mercutio's reference is to Rosaline, Romeo's beloved before he falls, at first glance, in love with Juliet, who instantly reciprocates. The medlar, rotten with ripeness, popularly was believed to have the likeness of the female genitalia, and "to meddle" meant to perform sexual intercourse. Mercutio happily also cites a popular name for the medlar, the open arse, as well as the pop'rin pear, at once pop-her-in her open arse, and the slang name for a French pear, the Poperingle (named for a town near Ypres). This is the antithetical prelude to a scene that famously concludes with Juliet's couplet:

Good night, good night. Parting is such sweet sorrow  
 That I shall say good night till it be morrow.

[2.2.185–186]

Mercutio at his best is a high-spiritual unbeliever in the religion of love, reductive as he may be:



*Benvolio* Here comes Romeo, here comes Romeo!

*Mercutio* Without his roe, like a dried herring, O flesh, flesh,  
 how art thou fishified! Now is he for the numbers that  
 Petrarch flowed in. Laura, to his lady, was but a kitchen  
 wench – marry, she had a better love to berhyme her –  
 Dido a dowdy, Cleopatra a gypsy, Helen and Hero hildings  
 and harlots, Thisbe a gray eye or so, [. . .]

[2.4.34–40]

Obsessed as he may be, Mercutio has the style to take his death wound as gallantly as anyone in Shakespeare:

*Romeo* Courage, man, the hurt cannot be much.

*Mercutio* No, 'tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church  
 door, but 'tis enough, 'twill serve. Ask for me tomorrow  
 and you shall find me a grave man. I am peppered, I  
 warrant, for this world. A plague o' both your houses.

[3.1.91–95]

That indeed is what in his death Mercutio becomes, a plague upon both Romeo of the Montagues and Juliet of the Capulets, since henceforward the tragedy speeds on to its final double catastrophe. Shakespeare is already Shakespeare in his subtle patterning, although rather overlyrical still in his style. The two fatal figures in the play are its two liveliest comics, Mercutio and the Nurse. Mercutio's aggressivity has prepared the destruction of love, though there is no negative impulse in Mercutio, who dies by the tragic irony that Romeo's intervention in the duel with Tybalt is prompted by love for Juliet, a relationship of which Mercutio is totally unaware. Mercutio is victimized by what is most central to the play, and yet he dies without knowing what *Romeo*

*and Juliet* is all about: the tragedy of authentic romantic love. For Mercutio, that is nonsense: love is an open arse and a pop'rin pear. To die as love's martyr, as it were, when you do not believe in the religion of love, and do not even know what you are dying for, is a grotesque irony that foreshadows the dreadful ironies that will destroy Juliet and Romeo alike as the play concludes.

Juliet's Nurse, despite her popularity, is altogether a much darker figure. Like Mercutio, she is inwardly cold, even toward Juliet, whom she has raised. Her language captivates us, as does Mercutio's, but Shakespeare gives both of them hidden natures much at variance with their exuberant personalities. Mercutio's incessant bawdiness is the mask for what may be a repressed homoeroticism, and like his violence may indicate a flight from the acute sensibility at work in the Queen Mab speech until it too transmutes into obscenity. The Nurse is even more complex; her apparent vitalism and her propulsive flood of language beguile us in her first full speech:

Even or odd, of all days in the year,  
 Come Lammas Eve at night shall she be fourteen.  
 Susan and she (God rest all Christian souls)  
 Were of an age. Well, Susan is with God,  
 She was too good for me. But as I said,  
 On Lammas Eve at night shall she be fourteen.  
 That shall she. Marry, I remember it well.  
 'Tis since the earthquake now eleven years,  
 And she was wean'd (I never shall forget it),  
 Of all the days of the year, upon that day.  
 For I had then laid wormwood to my dug,

Sitting in the sun under the dovehouse wall.  
 My lord and you were then at Mantua.  
 Nay, I do bear a brain. But as I said,  
 When it did taste the wormwood on the nipple  
 Of my dug and felt it bitter, pretty fool,  
 To see it tetchy and fall out with the dug!  
 Shake, quoth the dovehouse! 'Twas no need, I trow,  
 To bid me trudge.  
 And since that time it is eleven years.  
 For then she could stand high lone. Nay, by th' rood,  
 She could have run and waddled all about;  
 For even the day before she broke her brow,  
 And then my husband – God be with his soul,  
 'A was a merry man – took up the child.  
 "Yea," quoth he, "dost thou fall upon thy face?  
 Thou wilt fall backward when thou hast more wit,  
 Wilt thou not, Jule?" And, by my holidam,  
 the pretty wretch left crying, and said "Ay."  
 To see now how a jest shall come about.  
 I warrant, an I should live a thousand years  
 I never should forget it. "Wilt thou not, Jule?" quoth he,  
 And, pretty fool, it stinted and said "Ay."

[I.3.16–48]

Her speech is shrewd and not so simple as first it sounds, and comes short of poignance, because already there is something antipathetic in the Nurse. Juliet, like her late twin sister, Susan, is too good for the Nurse, and there is an edge to the account of the weaning that is bothersome, since we do not hear the accents of love.

Shakespeare delays any more ultimate revelation of the Nurse's nature until the crucial scene where she fails Juliet. The exchanges here need to be quoted at length, because Juliet's shock is a new effect for Shakespeare. The Nurse is the person who has been closest to Juliet for all the fourteen years of her life, and suddenly Juliet realizes that what has seemed loyalty and care is something else.

*Juliet* O God, O Nurse, how shall this be prevented?

My husband is on earth, my faith in heaven.

How shall that faith return again to earth

Unless that husband send it me from heaven

By leaving earth? Comfort me, counsel me.

Alack, alack, that heaven should practice stratagems

Upon so soft a subject as myself.

What say'st thou? Hast thou not a word of joy?

Some comfort, Nurse.

*Nurse* Faith, here it is.

Romeo is banished, and all the world to nothing

That he dares ne'er come back to challenge you,

Or if he do, it needs must be by stealth.

Then, since the case so stands as now it doth,

I think it best you married with the County.

O he's a lovely gentleman.

Romeo's a dishclout to him. An eagle, madam,

Hath not so green, so quick, so fair an eye

As Paris hath. Beshrew my very heart,

I think you are happy in this second match,

For it excels your first, or if it did not,

Your first is dead – or 'twere as good he were

As living here and you no use of him.

*Juliet* Speak'st thou from thy heart?

*Nurse* And from my soul too, else beshrew them both.

*Juliet* Amen.

*Nurse* What?

*Juliet* Well, thou hast comforted me marvelous much.

Go in, and tell my lady I am gone,

Having displeased my father, to Laurence cell,

To make confession and to be absolved.

*Nurse* Marry, I will, and this is wisely done.

EXIT

*Juliet* Ancient damnation! O most wicked fiend,

Is it more sin to wish me thus forsworn,

Or to dispraise my lord with that same tongue

Which she hath praised him with above compare

So many thousand times? Go, counselor.

Thou and my bosom henceforth shall be twain.

I'll to the friar to know his remedy.

If all else fail, myself have power to die.

[3.5.205-43]

The more-than-poignant: "that heaven should practice stratagem / Upon so soft a subject as myself" is answered by the Nurse's astonishing "comfort": "it excels your first, or if it did not, / Your first is dead." The Nurse's argument is valid if convenience is everything; since Juliet is in love, we hear instead an overwhelming rejection of the Nurse, proceeding from the eloquent "amen" on to the dry: "Well, thou hast comforted me marvelous much." The Nurse indeed is "Ancient damnation! O most wicked fiend," and we will hardly hear from her again until Juliet "dies"

her first death in this play. Like Mercutio, the Nurse moves us at last to distrust every apparent value in the tragedy except the lovers' commitment to each other.

Juliet, and not Romeo, or even Brutus in *Julius Caesar*, dies her second death as a prefiguration of Hamlet's charismatic splendor. Romeo, though he changes enormously under her influence, remains subject to anger and to despair, and is as responsible as Mercutio and Tybalt are for the catastrophe. Having slain Tybalt, Romeo cries out that he has become "Fortune's fool." We would wince if Juliet called herself "Fortune's fool," since she is as nearly flawless as her situation allows, and we recall instead her wry prayer: "Be fickle, Fortune." Perhaps any playgoer or any reader remembers best Romeo and Juliet's aubade after their single night of fulfillment:

*Juliet* Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet near day.  
 It was the nightingale, and not the lark,  
 That pierced the fearful hollow of thine ear.  
 Nightly she sings on yond pom'granate tree.  
 Believe me, love, it was the nightingale.

*Romeo* It was the lark, the herald of the morn,  
 No nightingale. Look, love, what envious streaks  
 Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east.  
 Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day  
 Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops.  
 I must be gone and live, or stay and die.

*Juliet* Yond light is not daylight, I know it, I.  
 It is some meteor that the sun exhales  
 To be to thee this night a torchbearer

And light thee on thy way to Mantua.  
 Therefore stay yet, thou need'st not to be gone.  
*Romeo* Let me be ta'en, let me be put to death.  
 I am content, so thou wilt have it so.  
 I'll say yon gray is not the morning's eye,  
 'Tis but the pale reflex of Cynthia's brow.  
 Nor that is not the lark whose notes do beat  
 The vaulty heaven so high above our heads.  
 I have more care to stay than will to go.  
 Come, death, and welcome. Juliet wills it so.  
 How is't, my soul? Let's talk. It is not day.

*Juliet* It is, it is. Hie hence, be gone, away.  
 It is the lark that sings so out of tune,  
 Straining harsh discords and unpleasing sharps.  
 Some say the lark makes sweet division.  
 This doth not so, for she divideth us.  
 Some say the lark and loathèd toad change eyes.  
 O now I would they had changed voices too,  
 Since arm from arm that voice doth us affray,  
 Hunting thee hence with "Hunt's up" to the day.  
 O now be gone, more light and light it grows.

*Romeo* More light and light, more dark and dark our woes.

[3.5.1-36]

Exquisite in itself, this is also a subtle epitome of the tragedy of this tragedy, for the entire play could be regarded as a dawn song that, alas, is out of phase. A bemused audience, unless the director is shrewd, is likely to become skeptical that event after event arrives in the untimeliest way possible. Romeo and Juliet's aubade is so disturbing precisely because they are not courtly love sophisti-

cates working through a stylized ritual. The courtly lover confronts the possibility of a real-enough death if he lingers too long, because his partner is an adulterous wife. But Juliet and Romeo know that death after dawn would be Romeo's punishment, not for adultery, but merely for marriage. The subtle outrageousness of Shakespeare's drama is that everything is against the lovers: their families and the state, the indifference of nature, the vagaries of time, and the regressive movement of the cosmological contraries of love and strife. Even had Romeo transcended his anger; even if Mercutio and the Nurse were not quarrelsome busybodies, the odds are too great against the triumph of love. That is the aubade's undersong, made explicit in Romeo's great outcry against the contraries: "More light and light, more dark and dark our woes."

What was Shakespeare trying to do for himself as a playwright by composing *Romeo and Juliet*? Tragedy did not come easily to Shakespeare, yet all this play's lyricism and comic genius cannot hold off the dawn that will become a destructive darkness. With just a few alterations, Shakespeare could have transformed *Romeo and Juliet* into a play as cheerful as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The young lovers, escaped to Mantua or Padua, would not have been victims of Verona, or of bad timing, or of cosmological contraries asserting their sway. Yet this travesty would have been intolerable for us, and for Shakespeare: a passion as absolute as Romeo's and Juliet's cannot consort with comedy. Mere sexuality will do for comedy, but the shadow of death makes eroticism the companion of tragedy. Shakespeare, in *Romeo and Juliet*, eschews Chaucerian irony, but he takes from *The Knight's Tale* Chaucer's intimation that we are always keeping appointments we haven't made. Here it is the sublime appointment kept by Paris and



Romeo at Juliet's supposed tomb, which soon enough becomes both her authentic tomb and their own. What is left on stage at the close of this tragedy is an absurd pathos: the wretched Friar Laurence, who fearfully abandoned Juliet; a widowed Montague, who vows to have a statue of Juliet raised in pure gold; the Capulets vowing to end a feud already spent in five deaths – those of Mercutio, Tybalt, Paris, Romeo, and Juliet. The closing curtain of any proper production of the play should descend upon these final ironies, presented as ironies, and not as images of reconciliation. As is *Julius Caesar* after it, *Romeo and Juliet* is a training ground in which Shakespeare teaches himself remorselessness and prepares the way for his five great tragedies, starting with the *Hamlet* of 1600–1601.

## FURTHER READING



This is not a bibliography but a selective set of starting places.

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## FINDING LIST



Repeated unfamiliar words and meanings, alphabetically arranged, with  
act, scene, and footnote number of first occurrence

<p>'a            1.3.38</p> <p><i>about</i>        1.1.118</p> <p><i>adventure</i>    2.2.56</p> <p><i>affections</i>   1.1.132</p> <p><i>against</i>      3.4.16</p> <p><i>an</i>            1.1.28</p> <p><i>anon</i>         1.4.102</p> <p><i>apt</i>            3.1.23</p> <p><i>aqua vitae</i>    3.2.60</p> <p><i>art</i>            2.4.90</p> <p><i>attend</i>        1.prologue.23</p> <p><i>bandy</i>        2.5.12</p> <p><i>beshrew</i>      2.5.24</p> <p><i>brief</i>         3.2.37</p> <p><i>but</i>            1.1.69</p> <p><i>chide</i>         2.3.76</p> <p><i>conceit</i>      2.6.27</p>	<p><i>counsel</i>      1.1.146</p> <p><i>course</i>       1.4.136</p> <p><i>cousin</i>       1.1.163</p> <p><i>crave</i>        1.5.109</p> <p><i>cull</i>          4.3.5</p> <p><i>dear</i>         2.2.30</p> <p><i>defy</i>         5.1.19</p> <p><i>desperate</i>    1.2.45</p> <p><i>devise</i>       2.4.148</p> <p><i>doom</i>        3.1.87</p> <p><i>draw</i>         1.1.29</p> <p><i>dry beat</i>     3.1.54</p> <p><i>else</i>         1.1.193</p> <p><i>envious</i>     1.1.153</p> <p><i>ere</i>           1.1.113</p> <p><i>fain</i>         2.2.57</p> <p><i>fair</i>          1.prologue.3</p>
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FINDING LIST

<i>fearful</i>	1.prologue.18	<i>presently</i>	4.1.33
<i>feast</i>	1.2.14	<i>put from</i>	3.5.60
<i>fond</i>	2.2.66	<i>remedy</i>	3.5.151
<i>gentle</i>	1.1.167	<i>rough</i>	1.1.169
<i>God den</i>	1.2.53	<i>rude</i>	1.4.31
<i>hold</i>	1.5.59	<i>ruled</i>	1.1.227
<i>honest</i>	1.5.122	<i>saucy</i>	1.5.75
<i>humor</i>	1.1.137	<i>seeming</i>	1.1.178
<i>livery</i>	2.2.4	<i>sirrah</i>	1.2.32
<i>look to</i>	1.5.7	<i>slave</i>	1.1.35
<i>maid</i>	1.3.58	<i>stay</i>	1.2.35
<i>mark</i>	2.4.145	<i>steal</i>	1.1.129
<i>marry</i>	1.1.53	<i>still</i>	1.1.38
<i>matter</i>	1.3.7	<i>straight</i>	1.3.86
<i>means</i>	1.1.149	<i>substance</i>	1.4.119
<i>measure</i>	1.4.16	<i>taken</i>	3.1.88
<i>morrow</i>	1.1.162	<i>true</i>	2.2.69
<i>moved</i>	1.1.30	<i>very</i>	1.3.62
<i>naught</i>	1.prologue.21	<i>villain</i>	1.1.80
<i>ne'er</i>	1.2.71	<i>want</i>	2.2.101
<i>office</i>	4.5.50	<i>warrant</i>	1.3.45
<i>parts</i>	3.3.2	<i>watch</i>	3.3.83
<i>perforce</i>	1.5.83	<i>weraday</i>	3.2.31
<i>passing</i>	1.1.232	<i>wherefore</i>	1.5.60
<i>present</i>	4.1.41	<i>wit(s)</i>	1.1.211